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July 2004

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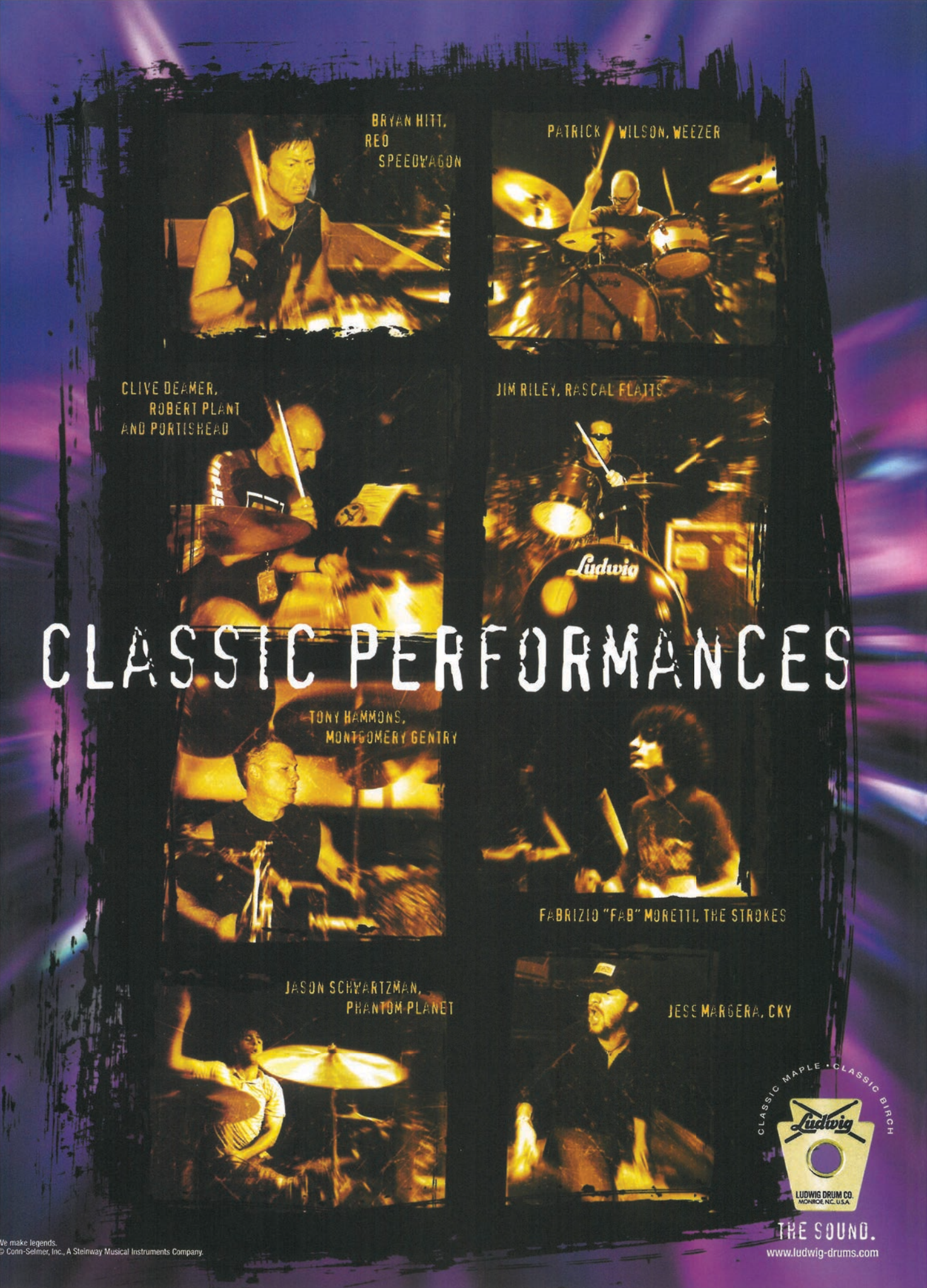
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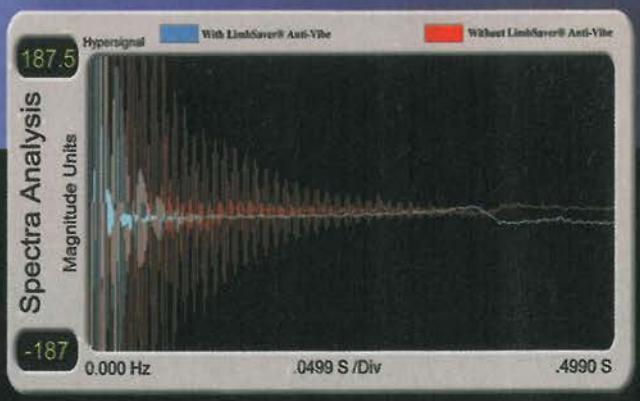

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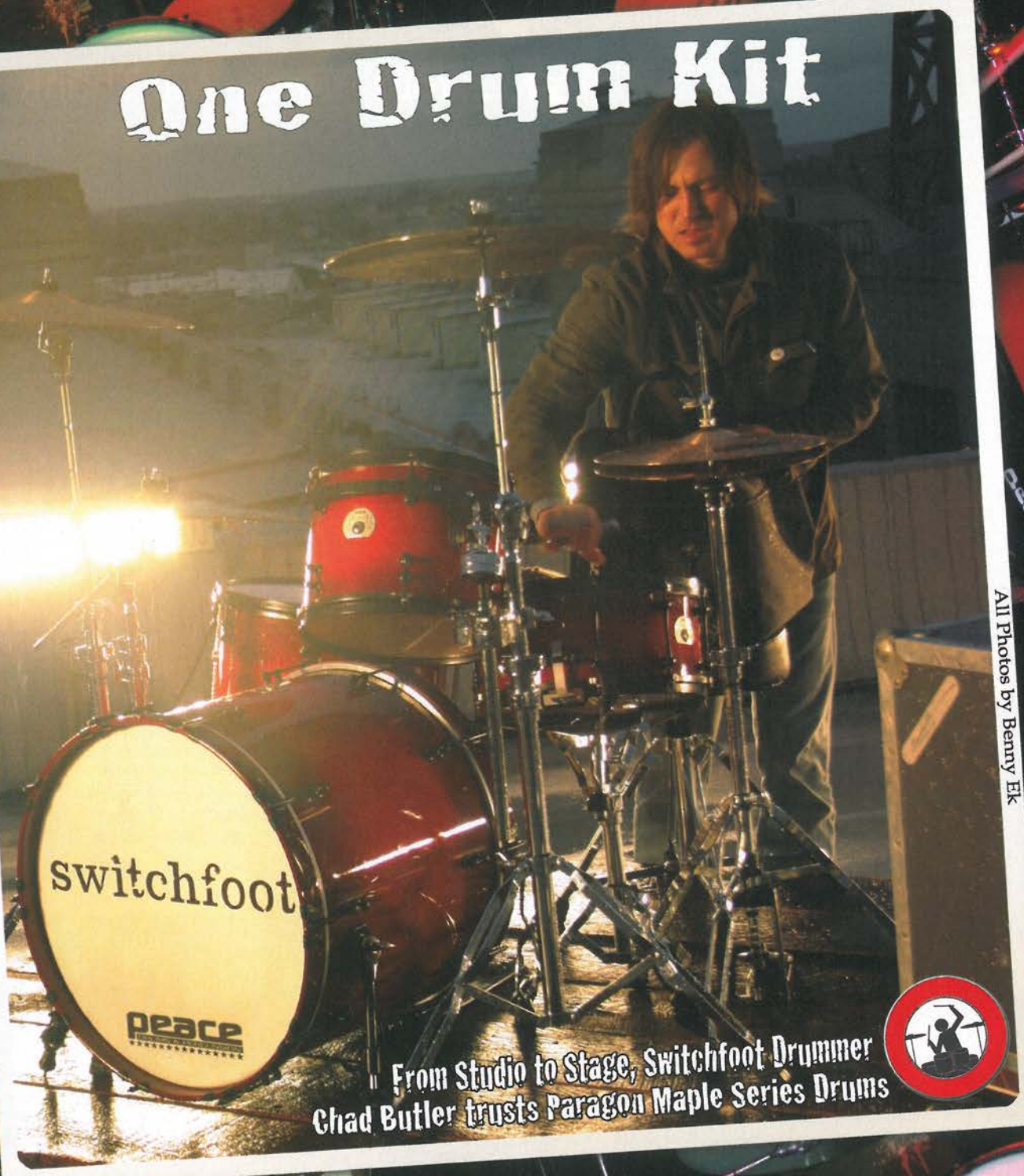

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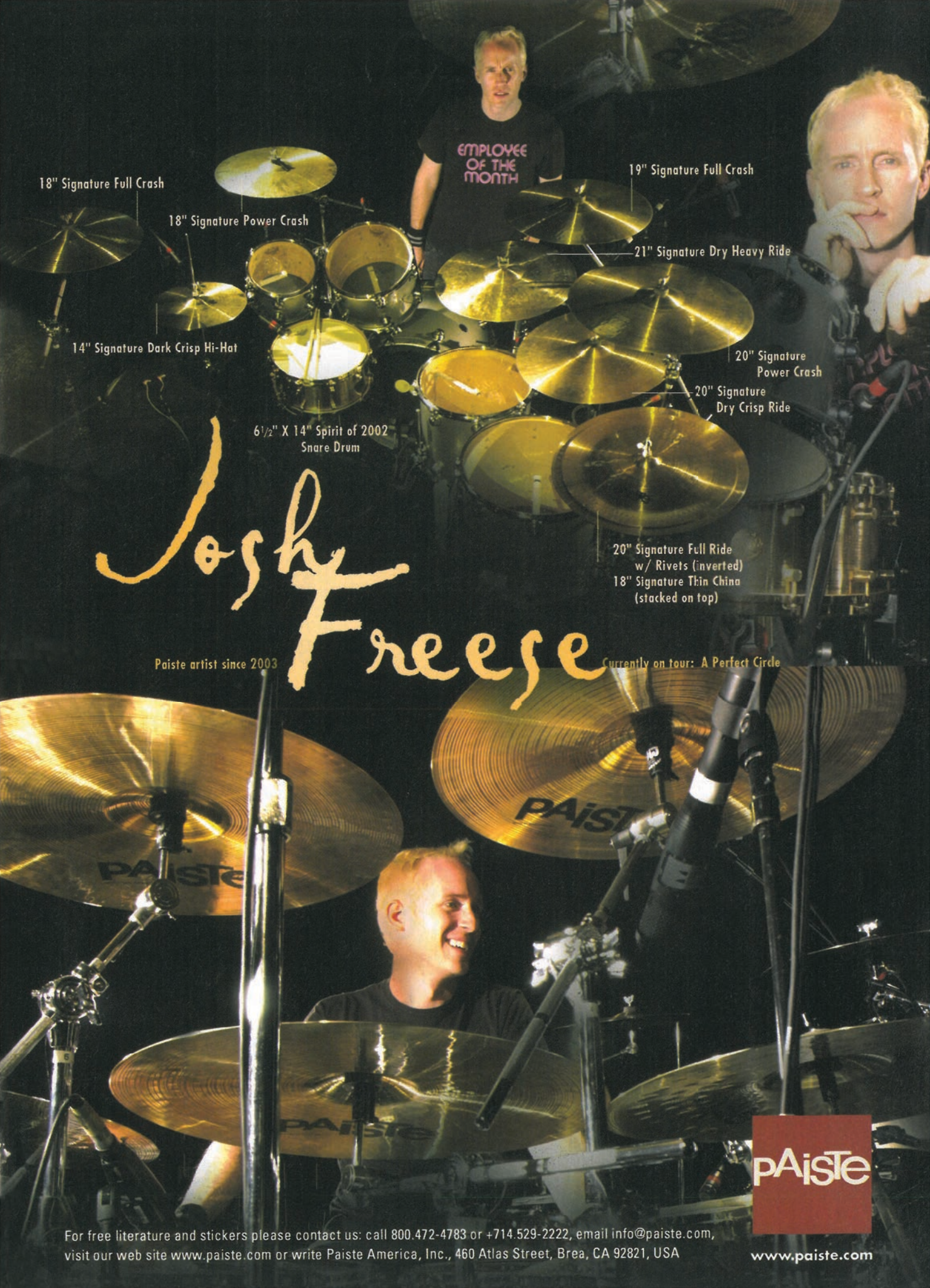
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Contents

Volume 28, Number 7

Paul La Raia

Foo Fighters'
Dave Grohl 38
Just when you think Dave Grohl has reached the peak of critical and popular success, he lays down yet another monstrous slab of rock, called Probot.
by Ken Micallef

MD's 2004 Readers Poll Results 56
The best of today's drumming scene, according to the world's most informed players—you!

M Sayegh
Percussion Master
Ralph MacDonald 66
Stacked end-to-end, the albums Ralph MacDonald has played on would reach the moon and back. Okay, that's a lie—but it's darned nearly *true*.
by Billy Amendola

The Bad Plus's
Dave King 118
Rhythmic theorist? Musique-concrete experimentalist? Or just a kick-ass drummer?
by Ken Micallef

WIN! WIN! WIN! 140
One Of Several Terrific Drumkits In A Massive Prize Package From Mapex

Update 18
Velvet Revolver's
Matt Sorum

avant-garde leader
Susie Ibarra

Death Cab For Cutie's
Jason McGerr

Tesla's
Troy Luccketta

travelin' man
Dana Hammond

A Different View
Andy Hess 112
Low-frequency perspectives from the new Muler.
by Billy Ward

Playback 134
Steve Goulding
A new wave drumming mainstay is still kicking hard.
by Adam Budofsky

Portraits 142
Andrea Centazzo
Percussion Renaissance man.
by Michael Bettine

Education

86 Jazz Drummers' Workshop
Drummers Of Diana Krall: A Style & Analysis
by Dave Miele

90 Rudimental Symposium
The Triplet-Duple: A Hot Lick For Your Hands
by Chet Doboe

92 Rock 'N' Jazz Clinic
Beat Enhancing: Ghost Strokes And Other Cool Techniques
by Rod Morgenstein

94 Off The Record
Finger Eleven's Rich Beddoe
by Ed Breckenfeld

96 Basics
Reading Basics, Part 1: Taking Your First Steps
by Kelly Paletta

100 First Person
Street Drumming: A Firsthand Account
by Wyatt Green

104 Health & Science
Drummers Are Athletes: Warming Up, Stretching, And Balancing Your Mind And Body
by Jennie Hoeft

108 Taking Care Of Business
Sharing The Wealth: Revenue Sources And Group Percentages
by Bobby Borg

128 Rock Perspectives
Let There Be Drums! Top-15 Drum Performances Of The 1960s
by Jim Duffy

Page 162

Departments

8 An Editor's Overview
Staying Strong
by Isabel Spagnardi

10 Readers' Platform

12 It's Questionable

14 Ask A Pro
Walfredo Reyes Jr., Jeff Hamilton, and Terry Bozzio

150 Showcase

154 On The Move

162 Critique

166 Drum Market
Including Vintage Corner

168 Backbeats
Woodstick 2004, and more

176 Drumkit Of The Month

Page 26

Equipment

26 Product Close-Up
Monolith Odyssey Drums

30 Sabian HHX Manhattan Jazz Cymbals

32 Potyondi Signature Series Cast-Iron Snare Drum

33 Quick Looks: Pro-Mark Pro-Round Series Sticks

34 Stagg Cymbals

36 Carbonlite Carbon-Fiber Cymbal Boom Arms

110 Shop Talk
Bill Reamer: Classic Craftsman
by Mark Hoffman

156 New And Notable

Page 160

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Staying Strong

It's been a few months since I last wrote for this column. That was for our March '04 issue, in which we ran a tribute to my late husband, *MD* founder and publisher Ron Spagnardi. For this article I decided to write from home. In fact, I do a lot of my work in Ron's den. Working in the same space he worked in somehow makes me feel a bit better and inspires me.

In my last editorial, I stated that we here at *Modern Drummer* would continue to keep Ron's dream alive. We're doing just that. And actually, he's still inspiring us. In Ron's last editorial, "Why Read?," which ran in our December '03 issue, he urged drummers to learn to read music. He detailed the many benefits of doing so. Well, in this issue, we've taken that idea one step further.

This month we're kicking off a six-part series on learning to read music. The series is targeted right at drummers, with excellent, easy-to-understand examples. I want to thank writer Kelly Paletta, along with our fine editorial staff, for putting together this fun and interesting introduction to the basics of reading. If you don't know how to read, I invite you to check it out. (The article appears on page 96.)

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Rick Watts, the host of Drumradio.com. Rick put together a wonderful audio tribute to Ron. It features an interview with him from March of 2002, as well as comments from some of our drummer friends, like Carmine Appice, Louie Bellson, Steve Smith, Joe Morello, and many others. I sincerely appreciate their taking time out from their busy schedules to share their thoughts and stories about Ron. It was great to hear all of the nice things they had to say about him, one in particular being, "He was a sweetheart of a man." That he was. If you'd like to hear the tribute, please visit www.drumradio.com, or simply click on the link at our Web site, www.moderndrummer.com.

Finally, I want to let you know that Ron left me with the best staff anyone could ask for. The people here at *MD* are more like family than employees. Their devotion to *Modern Drummer* can never really be put into words, but it's reflected in every issue of the magazine. I want to let everyone know that thanks to these fine employees, *MD* will continue to stay strong and on track.

Isabel Spagnardi

MODERN DRUMMER

Volume 28, Number 7

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine

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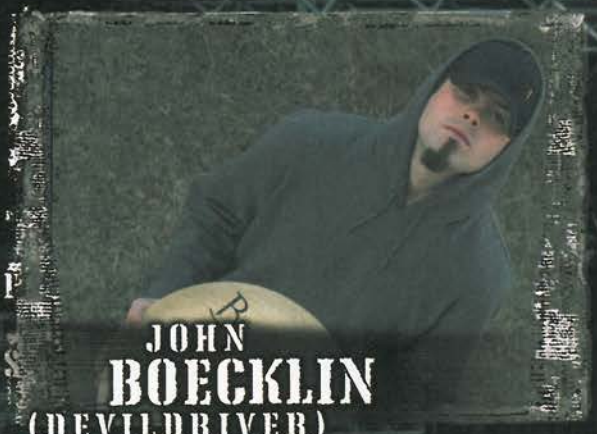

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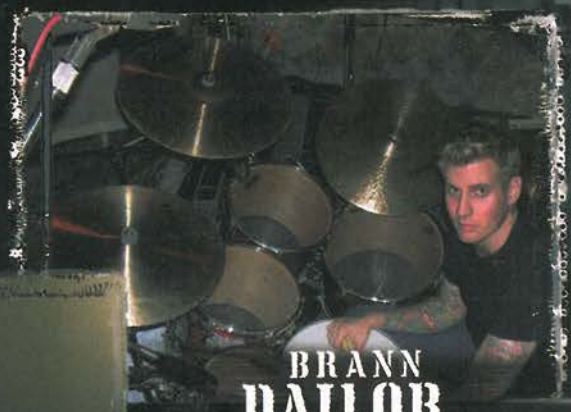

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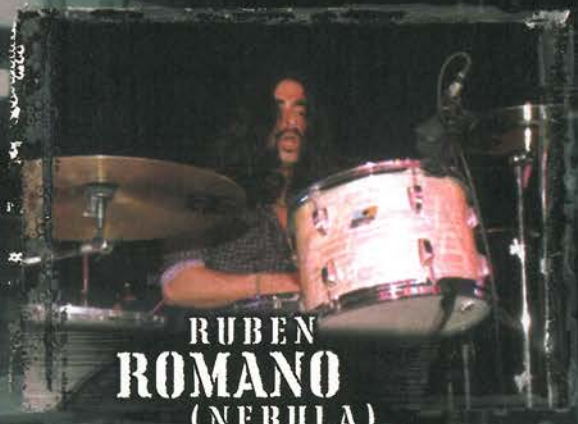

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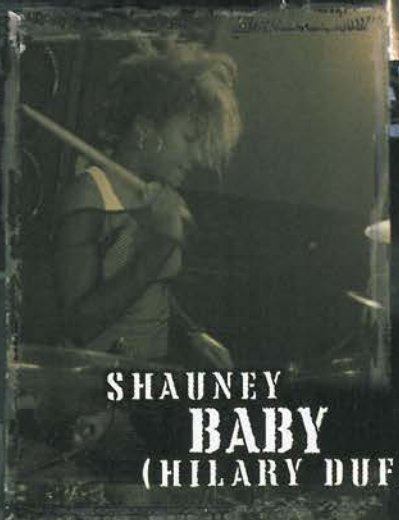

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on which Lee and Bob both played originally, their performances are re-recorded by Mike Bordin (drums) and Robert Trujillo (bass). I felt compelled to write because Lee's playing on these two Ozzy records is a part of rock 'n' roll history that, sadly, has now been lost to a new generation of young drummers. **Craig**

I was very impressed with the Chad Cromwell interview in your March '04 issue. However, in the sidebar to that story, you note that one of Chad's favorite albums is *So* by Peter Gabriel, and that the drummers on that album are Jerry Marotta (who played on two tracks) and Manu Katché (who played on four tracks). Stewart Copeland also played on that album, including on the hit track "Big Time." **Will Hardy**

Drum Nation

After reading your article on the *Drum Nation Volume 1* CD, I promptly went out and picked up the only copy I could find within a twenty-mile radius. It was well worth the drive. In fact, it has stayed in my CD player for two weeks now. What a phenomenal collection of artists and styles! There's something for everyone on this CD. It has also been a great practice tool to jam with.

Thanks for helping to put this excellent collection together. I'm already looking forward to Volume 2. **David Cummings**

Stanton Moore

Thanks for the in-depth feature on Stanton Moore in your April issue. Stanton's work with Galactic is some of the most original and unique drumming on today's music scene. It's great to see a young guy exhibit such respect for musical history combined with a totally forward-looking approach. The result is that Stanton sounds like no one else, yet his playing is totally accessible and enjoyable. He's out, but not so far out that you can't fathom what he's doing. And it always *grooves*. I don't think you can ask for more than that. **Fred Hammond**

Details, Details

In Ed Breckenfeld's April 2004 *Rock Perspectives* column, "How'd They Do That? Metal Mysteries," Tommy Aldridge is credited with playing the opening fill on Ozzy Osbourne's "Over The Mountain" from the *Diary Of A Madman* album. In fact, Lee Kerslake played on that record. Lee and bassist Bob Daisley were not credited for their performances on the album.

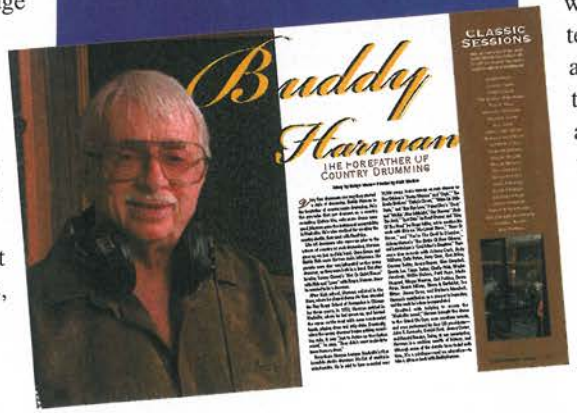
Adding insult to injury, on the recent re-issues of the first two Ozzy albums,

Buddy Harman

As a drummer for forty-plus years who grew up being influenced by all kinds of music, I was amazed at the number of incredible songs Buddy Harman helped to define and shape with his great drumming. As a long-time subscriber to *MD*, my question is simply this: Why was Stanton Moore on the cover of the April issue and not Buddy Harman?

I mean no disrespect to Stanton. I've never heard him play. But regardless of Stanton's talents, Buddy's phenomenal accomplishments should have earned him the place where he rightfully belongs. I mean, Elvis Presley, Patsy Cline, Roy Orbison, Johnny Cash, Brenda Lee, the Everly Brothers...come *on*.

Mark Edwards



Stamina Tip

I've been playing drums for over thirty-seven years. Recently, I started having problems with cramps and pulled muscles. Even with stretching, along with drinking water and national brands of health drinks, I couldn't get the cramping to stop. Then I discovered a drink called Sqwincher, which is being marketed for consumption by workers in factories and other hot, physically stressful environments. It helps prevent dehydration, and it has five times the electrolytes of Gatorade.

I served as drum tech for Steve Clark of Memento last year. He started drinking a Sqwincher Fast Pack before going on stage, and he was good to go. The whole band was soon drinking it, and by the end of Ozzfest 2003, over twelve bands were drinking it regularly. I'm now teching and stage managing for Kittie, and they're hooked as well. Sqwincher tastes great, and has no fake sugar and no caffeine. Check it out at www.sqwincher.com. **John Zwawa,**
drum tech/stage manager for Kittie

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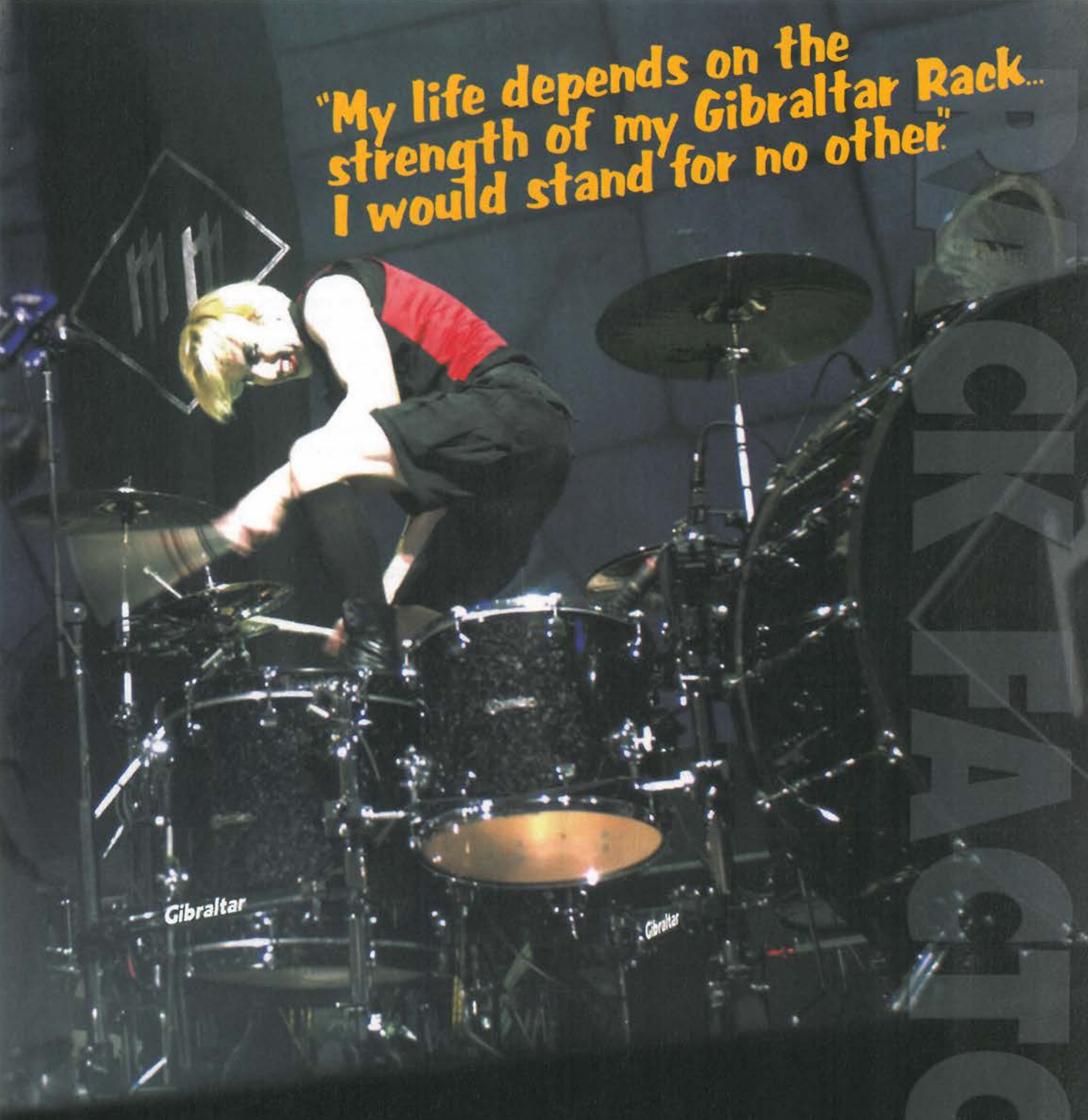

Every Marilyn Manson concert is an experience in shock therapy. The most powerful of jolts no doubt emanate from the rhythmic stamp of drummer Ginger Fish.

As you might imagine, his hardware has to endure the tyrannical onslaught that comes with each performance. And this band tours constantly. Which is why the rack of choice is none other than Gibraltar.

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Fitting A Bass Drum Head

I recently purchased a new front bass drum head (with a custom design on it, imprinted by the manufacturer). I'm hearing different ideas about installing the head. One suggestion is to bend it inside out around the ring to stretch it, then place it on the bass drum. The other is to place it on the bass drum, tighten it up really tight for a day, then go back and tune it. Your advice on this issue would be greatly appreciated. **Vito Rella**

We've never heard of anyone turning a plastic head inside out around the ring. That procedure dates back to the days of calf heads tucked onto flesh hoops. It would probably ruin a modern plastic head.

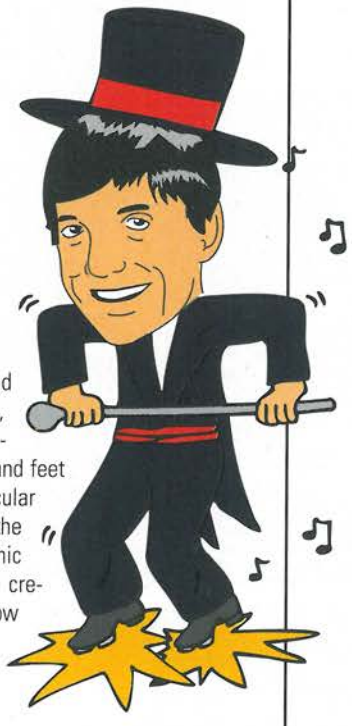
Tightening the head past the normal-use point and then re-tuning it is a common practice. The idea is to take any "stretch" or "give" out of the plastic film. It's an effective method, but it takes time. If you don't have that amount of time to wait, a quicker way is to install the head on the drum, tighten it up to about finger-tight on all the lugs, and then sit on it (with the drum sitting opposite-side down on the floor). Your weight will stretch the head out at the edges, without risk of denting it in the middle while it's not fully tensioned.

If you're using a Remo head, you may hear a crackling sound. Contrary to myth, this is not the head pulling out of the glue. It is the contour of the head at its edge straightening out as the head is stretched. This is a normal process that's necessary for the head to tune properly.

After you've sat on the head and stretched it a bit, bring it back to finger tight again, and repeat the process. Do this until sitting on the head no longer slackens it at all. At that point you can fine-tune the individual lugs and reasonably expect the head to retain that tension.

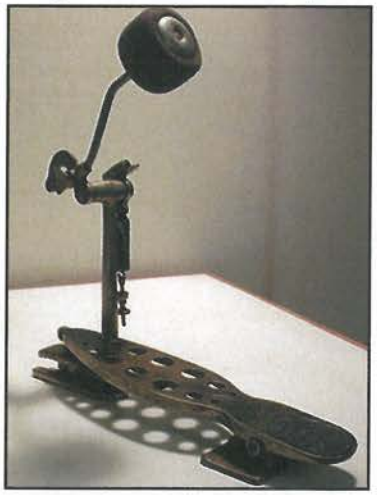
This process works well for regular drumheads. However, if your front bass drum head has imprinted artwork, you may not wish to risk any damage to that artwork by sitting on the head. In that case, we suggest you use the overnight-tighten method.

Does Tap Dancing Help Drumming?

I've heard Buddy Rich and Louie Bellson talk about how they learned to tap dance before they started up with the sticks, and that this helped both of them with their foot technique—especially Louie, since he plays double bass. How helpful is tap dancing in terms of developing single and double bass technique? **Jackson Marlette**

Tap dancing can improve drum-related footwork in two important areas. First, the physical exertion involved in tap dancing strengthens the muscles in the legs and feet (along with improving overall cardiovascular stamina). Second, tap dancing involves the use of the feet to create precise rhythmic patterns—a skill also necessary for the creation of patterns on bass drum pedals. How much help tap dancing would be to a drummer would vary with the individual. But it certainly couldn't hurt.

Antique Ludwig Bass Drum Pedal

I recently acquired a very old Ludwig bass drum pedal, and I have a couple of questions for your drum historian. First, is the angled beater part of the original pedal? My copy of *History Of The Ludwig Drum Company* shows a similar pedal manufactured in 1913. But it had a straight beater shaft. Second, is the number at the bottom of the pedal (on the heel plate) a date or a reference number? Any information will be greatly appreciated. **Mike Bourg**



According to *MD* drum historian Harry Cangany, "The Ludwig pedal model that you have was first made of wood and then made of steel. The beater in your pedal is certainly not original. The shaft should be straight, and the beater should be hard felt or—more typical of the day—lamb's wool. The July date in 1924 was shown in order to differentiate the pedal from its predecessor, because that's when Ludwig made an 'improvement'—a longer footboard."

Zenjian Cymbal Background

I have a 14" medium-weight cymbal with an extremely narrow lathing pattern top and bottom, with gorgeous hammering patterns on the bottom. The only identifying marks are the words "TRADE MARK" over the word "ZENJIAN." Also, there is a half moon and star insignia under the word "ZENJIAN," and some form of a language stamped above the words "TRADE MARK." Could you please help me identify my unknown cymbal? **Randy Lane**

Sabian chairman Robert Zildjian is an authority on cymbal history. He kindly provided the following response. Says Bob, "Zenjians were Avedis Zildjian's second line (Zilco), sold only to C.G. Conn for the drum divisions of Leedy and Ludwig & Ludwig. In 1946 and '47, Conn imported Italian cymbals and put the same Zenjian name on them. Zildjian threatened to sue, so Conn stopped. Your cymbal could be a UFIP-made model (if stamped 'Made in Italy') or a Zildjian-made Zilco (if stamped 'Made in the USA')."

John Grey Snare

I recently took an old snare I bought a few months back to my local drumshop to see about new heads and snares. The guy at the counter told me to email *Modern Drummer* and ask about the drum before I take off the old heads, just in case it might be worth something. It's a John Grey Broadway model, with the original snares, heads, and die-cast hoops, all in mint condition. I've looked everywhere for info about this drum. Anything you can tell me will be greatly appreciated. **Rick Hill**

Harry Cangany replies, "John Grey was a 200-year-old company when it went out of business. The Autocrat was their most expensive drum, and it featured a proprietary strainer design. The Broadway was the 'standard' series, sold as single drums and drumsets. They show up in the US from time to time; California seems to have gotten quite a few. Value is somewhat speculative because the brand is not that well known in the States. (Even Premier drums don't bring what they should, and it was a more popular company.) I would tag your drum at a value of $250–300. You should be able to replace the heads with no risk of diminishing the drum's value. Just hope they're not metric heads. If they are, 14" heads will usually fit the '14"' drums. But the '12"' and '16"' drums are bigger than US sizes, and call for specially made heads."

A Typical Cymbal Setup

Can you tell me what a typical cymbal setup would be for a drumset (ride, hi-hat, crashes, etc.). Also, what type of crash cymbals should I use for rock and pop? **Craig Hagan**

These days it's hard to suggest a "typical" cymbal setup, simply because there are so many different styles of music, so many different approaches to drumming, and so very many different types and models of cymbals. That being said, we can tell you what most drummers start out with, and where they might go from there as they mature as players.

A basic cymbal configuration for almost any style of playing is a set of hi-hats, a ride cymbal, and one or two crash cymbals. What size, model, and weight of cymbals you use will depend on how hard you hit, how loud the music you're playing is, and what sort of cymbal sound you wish to project. Jazz and light pop can employ thin—and sometimes small—cymbals. Loud, heavy rock music requires heavier—and sometimes larger—cymbals. You may need to make a compromise between musicality and functionality (to say nothing of budget) when it comes to selecting your first cymbal setup.

Once you have your basic setup, you may wish to expand with additional crashes, or possibly some "effects" cymbals like a splash (usually 8" to 12" and very thin) or a China-type. One way to help you choose your cymbal setup is to obtain the catalogs of the various manufacturers to learn what's available, or visit their Web sites. Those catalogs often include artist setups, along with educational information about cymbal selection and usage.

Readers with questions for this department may submit them to It's Questionable, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, or via email to rvh@moderndrummer.com. Please include your full name with your question.

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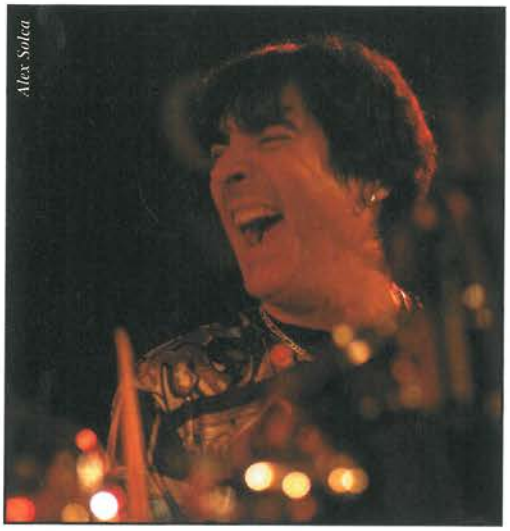
Steve Winwood's
Walfredo Reyes Jr. Inspirations

Q I saw you perform three years ago at the Cape Breton DrumFest, and I was blown away. I'd like to know who your inspirations were. I'd also like to know if the way you choose your cymbal setup has anything to do with your stylistic combination of Latin and jazz. **Dolore Lirette**


Alex Solca

A Thanks for your huge compliments. I'll try my best to answer your questions.

My first inspirations were the rock drummers that I heard on the radio while I was growing up in Puerto Rico. Just to name a few: Ringo Starr, John Bonham, Ginger Baker, Danny Seraphine, Buddy Miles, Carl Palmer, Charlie Watts, Mitch Mitchell, and David Garibaldi, along with the drummers from bands like Steppenwolf, Sly & The Family Stone, Elton John, Santana, Al Green, Stevie Wonder, and Elvis. It was not the chops that attracted me; it was the beats, the vibe—the music!

Later on, I graduated to jazz and fusion, and was inspired by drummers like Louie Bellson, Buddy Rich, Billy Cobham, Tony Williams, Lenny White, Alphonse Mouzon, and Eric Gravatt. Then it was on to great, versatile studio drummers like Steve Gadd, Jeff Porcaro, John Guerin, Harvey Mason, and Ed Green. I also got into Latin drumming at this time. My most immediate influence in this area was (and still is) my father, Walfredo Reyes Sr. I also owe a lot to Alex Acuña, Changuito, and Airto, just to name a few. I know there are many more that I've left out.

As far as my Sabian cymbal setup goes, I've been working as an all-around drummer/percussionist for many years, so the style of music dictates which cymbals I will use. The HHX line is my favorite, because I find it the most versatile. The line includes Studio, Stage, and Power models, all of which have that genuine "Turkish" sound. For loud music, I'll use Power HHX or AA cymbals. For softer music, I'll switch to HHXtreme or Evolution models. When I'm playing percussion, I use sizzle crashes, HHX Evolution splashes, and HHXtreme crashes. You can hit and roll on them with your hands or with sticks, and they sing beautifully.

I hope this explains a bit and is helpful to you. I can talk drums all day, so...stop me now! All the best to you.

Diana Krall's
Jeff Hamilton On Timekeeping

Q Ever since I got Diana Krall's *Live In Paris* CD I've been obsessed with your technique, style, swing, and impeccable time. The way you hold the beat down and keep the groove going blows my mind. I practice rudiments and paradiddles to a metronome, and for the most part, it does the trick. But can you suggest any exercises that would apply the metronome to laying down swing time? (That is, playing on the ride and/or the hats instead of just plain old snare rudiments.)

Also, can you tell me what ride cymbal you used on that same recording? I've been searching for a ride sound like that for quite a while. Thanks, and keep up your inspiring work. **Lewis Kinsky**

A I'm very glad you like the CD. A *Live In Paris* DVD is also available, so you can actually see some of the answers to your questions.

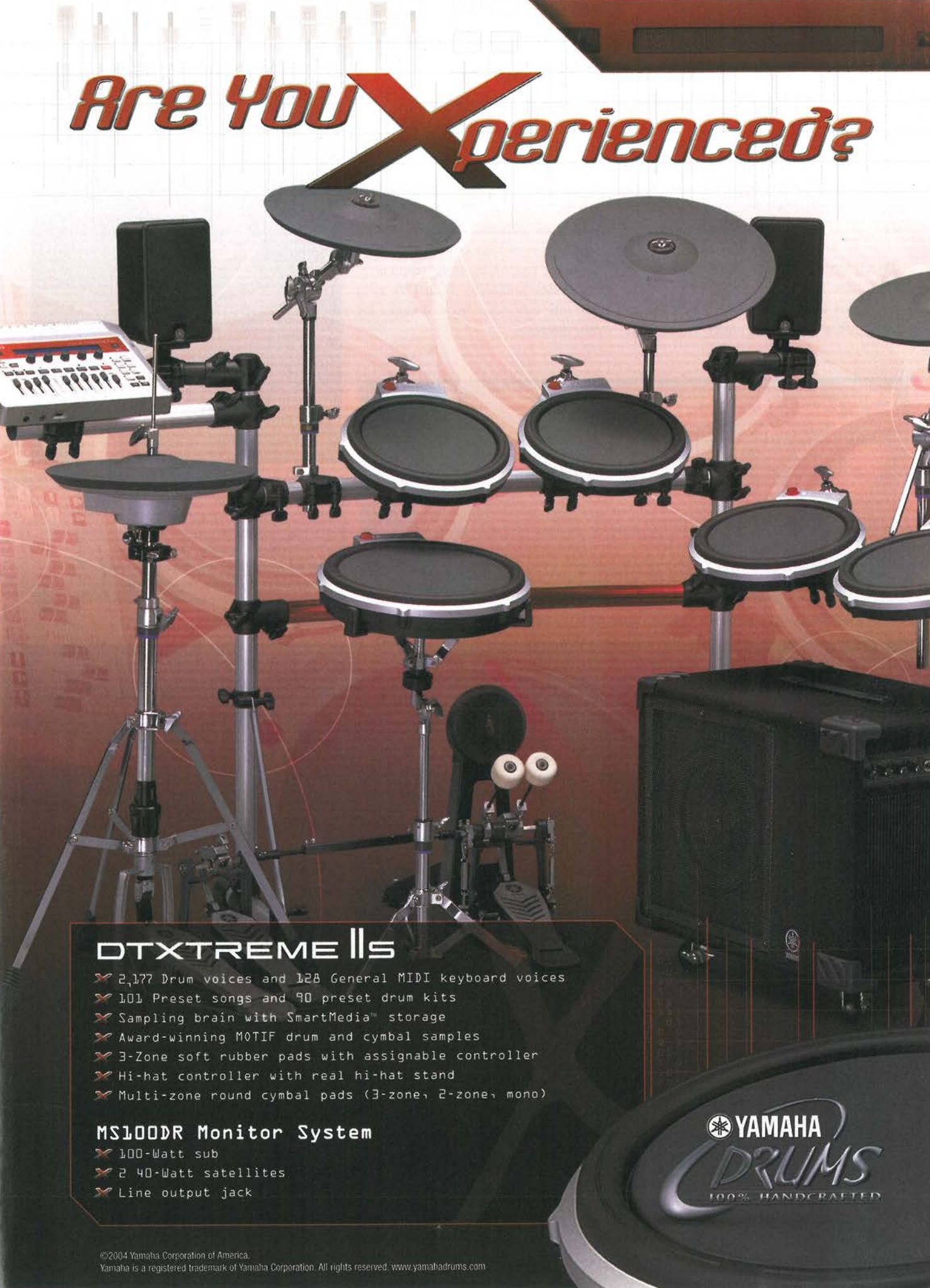
When I play time, I'm confident with how my beat feels. If it feels good to me, then it will probably feel okay to the other players. I don't actually think of "holding the tempo down." Instead, I keep a fragment of the melody or ensemble figure in my head to remind me how that phrase "sits" in the groove. Keep reverting back to that throughout the tune to check yourself. But play time *with* the others. Everyone in the band is responsible for bringing his or her time to the tune. Don't worry about "perfect time." None of us has it.

To develop a solid time feel, I suggest playing to recordings that make you tap your foot and feel good. A dose of Mel Lewis every morning was the ticket for me. I'd play to The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra's "Groove Merchant" and "Big Dipper," and it would set the pace for the entire day. Make sure you lock in with the exact time on the recording.

By the way, I've never been hired by a metronome. Metronomes are good for practicing rudiments, as you mentioned. But jazz gets stiff when played to a click or a metronome. None of the jazz recordings I'm on use clicks. No one even brings it up unless they're joking.

The cymbals on *Live In Paris* are from the Bosphorus Hammer Series that I helped design in Istanbul a few years ago. They're only made in my sizes: 20", 22" with rivets, 22" Hammer China, and 14" hi-hats. Keep swinging, and have fun doing it.

Are You Xperienced?



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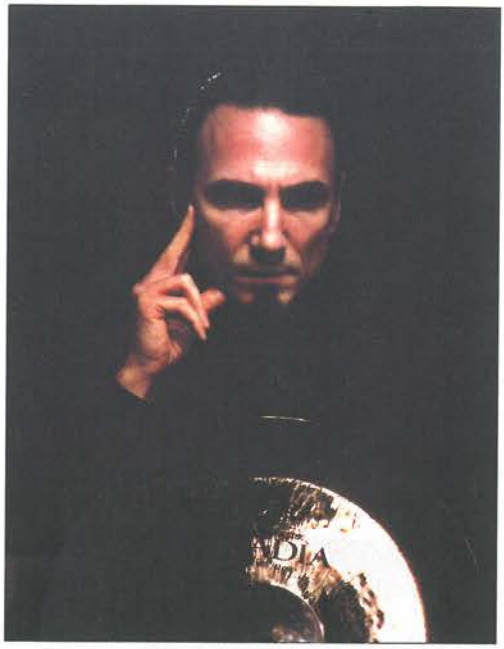
Terry Bozzio's
Black Page Drumheads

Q I love the sound of your drums on the version of "The Black Page" that appears on the Vic Firth Web site. What kind of heads are you using on that recording?

Michael Mastropierro

A All my heads are the Attack Terry Bozzio signature model. I have clear tom heads top and bottom, and a coated head with a dot for the snare batter. The bass drums have coated or clear batters, with black ThinSkin front heads.

I'm really happy with the heads that we've developed at Attack. They have steel crimped rims and special Mylar film, which combine to give me more response, more resonance, and better tunability than I've ever had with any other head. Thanks for your interest.



Repeat Bar
A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"I don't know how anyone can play fast without practicing. I practiced double kick playing to a click track, with five-pound weights on my feet. It's all about doing your homework."

Sum 41's **Steve Jocz**, July 2003

Would you like to ask your favorite drummer a question?

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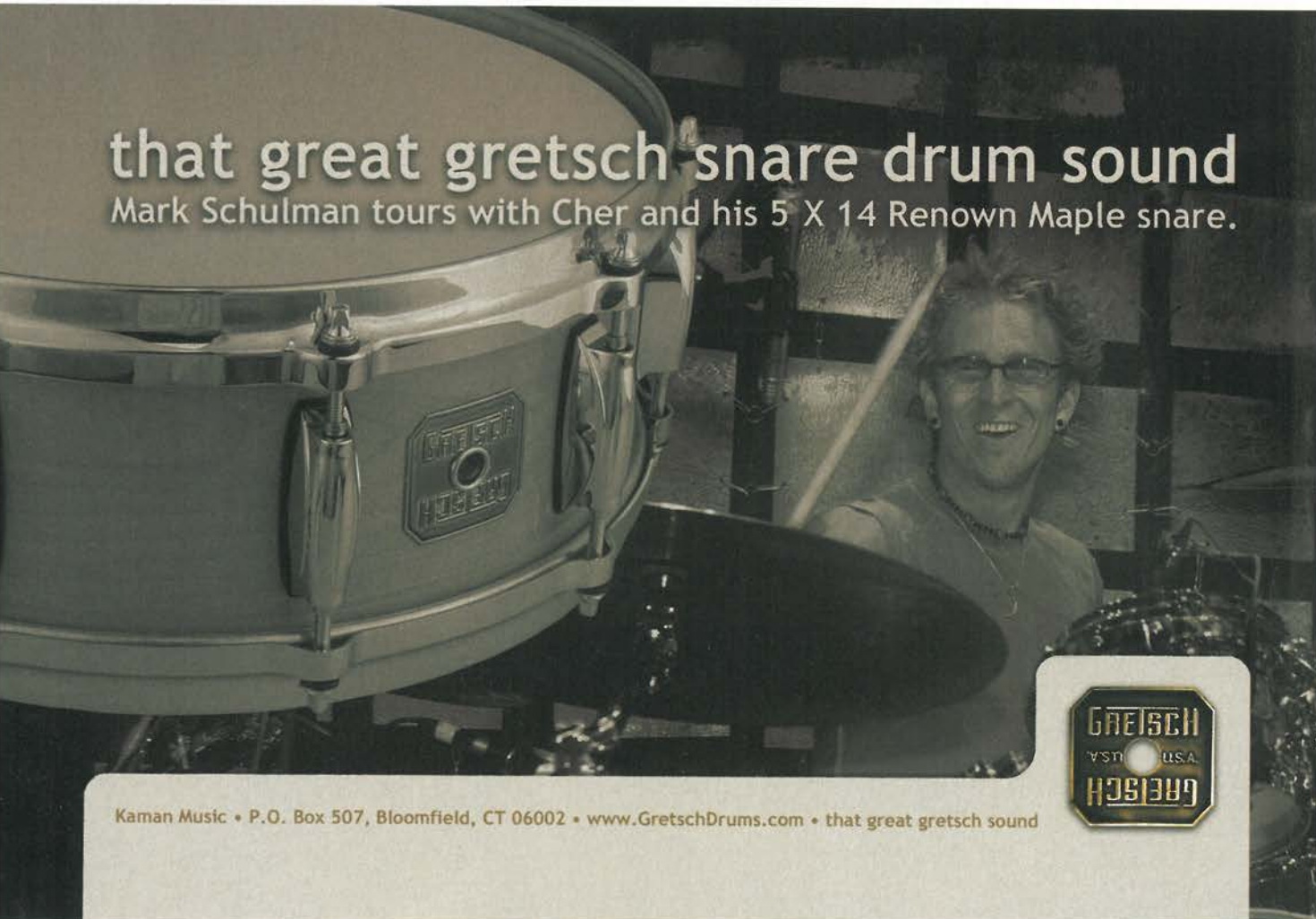

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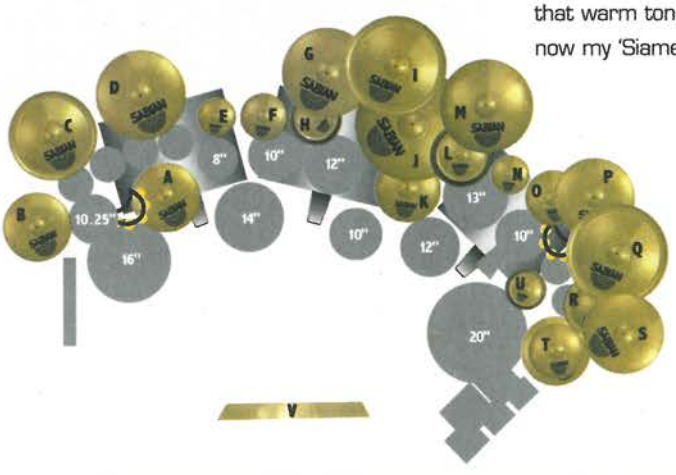
- MIKE PORTNOY - Dream Theater



MIKE PORTNOY - Dream Theater > SET-UP

A) 14" AAX Stage Hats
B) 14" HHX Studio Crash
C) 18" HHX Chinese
D) 18" HHX Studio Crash
E) 7" Signature Max Splash
F) 9" Signature Max Splash
G) 18" AA Medium Thin Crash
H) Signature Max Stax (Mid)
I) 20" HHX Chinese
J) 22" Hand Hammered Rock Ride
K) 13" HHX Groove Hats
L) Signature Max Stax (Low)
M) 19" Signature Fierce Crash
N) 7" Signature Max Splash
O) 11" Signature Max Splash
P) 17" Hand Hammered Thin Crash
Q) 20" Hand Hammered Chinese
R) 12" Ice Bell over Signature Max Stax (High)
S) 16" HHXtreme Crash
T) Triple Hi-Hat
U) 8" Hi-Hats (2 Signature Max Stax Bottoms)
V) 28" Zodiac Gong

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> sabian.com

VELVET REVOLVER'S
Matt Sorum
Welcome To The Rumble

"I wanted to get back that spirit we used to have when we were doing G N' R stuff." That's drummer Matt Sorum talking about the session for his latest project, a three-fifths Guns N' Roses reunion of sorts, dubbed Velvet Revolver. The act features Sorum along with G N' R guitarist Slash and bassist Duff McKagan, ex-Wasted Youth guitarist Dave Kushner, and Stone Temple Pilots vocalist Scott Weiland. "On the records I played with G N' R," Matt says, "most of those sessions were cut live, no click, just going in there and rockin'."

Sorum nailed the Velvet Revolver session in just shy of a week's time. While most of the debut album sports the signature Sorum sonics and performance we've come to expect from him—large room sounds with long decays and full-bodied snares coupled with unwavering, straightforward slammin' rock beats—there are a couple of detours from the otherwise massive rock production. "Loving The Alien," for example, finds Sorum reaching back in time for a retro touch.

"I ran into Eddie Kramer [legendary Jimi Hendrix/Led Zeppelin engineer] in the hallway at NRG studios, and I asked him to mike up my kit old-school style," Sorum explains. "I used a vintage Ludwig kit and had Eddie mike it with three mic's to get a trippy, Ringo Starr kind of vibe."

On "Big Machine," Sorum tracked using a click track (which otherwise was used sparingly throughout the session) and a couple of different kits. "I re-cut the intro drums and breakdown drums with a different drumkit," Matt explains. "In the breakdown, I went down to more of a padded, muted, lower snare drum with a 20" kick. But when the chorus kicked back in, I busted in with the big kit."

Sorum's typical "big kit" on the Velvet Revolver session consisted of an 18x24 kick teamed with 13", 16", and 18" toms. The snare arsenal included a Ludwig Black Beauty, a Tama Bell Brass, and an old Noble & Cooley/Zildjian metal snare.

"I wanted this really aggro, almost ugly sound, so I tuned that drum up high," Sorum notes. "I used it on a track called 'Dirty Little Thing,' and it gave the track a lot of angst and attitude. I find that snare drums give tracks such character, so I get into picking the right drum for the tune."

Of course, retention of the original G N' R spirit came via his insistence that the drums were cut straight to 2" tape. "Not a lot of editing was involved," he notes. "It was pretty much like, 'That's the track, let's use it!' What you hear is what you get."

Waleed Rashidi

Alex Solca

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Susie Ibarra
Tone, Time, And Tenacity

Claudio Casanova

A highly regarded and ubiquitous figure on New York's fertile downtown improvising scene, drummer Susie Ibarra has appeared in a variety of cutting-edge contexts over the past ten years at such alternative venues as Tonic, The Knitting Factory, and New York's annual celebration of the avant-garde, The Vision Festival.

Ibarra's highly interactive, painterly touch, rolling pulse, and melodic penchant on the kit have graced albums by such jazz and avant-garde figures as John Zorn, Derek Bailey, Dave Douglas, David S. Ware, William Parker, and Pauline Oliveros. She has also collaborated with fringe rockers like Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore and the band Yo La Tengo. But it is in the context of bandleader and composer that Ibarra reveals the full scope of her musicality.

Ibarra's 2002 release on Zorn's Tzadik label, the provocative and enchanting *Songbird Suite*, introduced her working trio of pianist Craig Taborn and violinist Jennifer Choi. Last year she appeared in a highly charged duet collaboration with virtuoso upright bassist Mark Dresser on *Tone Time* (Wobbly Rail), which brilliantly showcased the wide palette of colors and extended techniques that she brings to bear on the kit.

On Ibarra's latest recording, *Lakbay* (Tzadik Composers Series), she performs a hypnotic and melodic duet with Afro-Cuban percussionist Roberto Rodriguez on a piece called "Folklorico." On this cut Susie eschews the trapset for a Philippine wooden kulintang, a tuned percussion instrument somewhat along the lines of marimba or baliphone. The remainder of the recording is the dynamic ten-part suite "Lakbay/Journey," Ibarra's tribute to a day in the life of a Filipino immigrant field worker.

Recently Ibarra premiered a commissioned piece for ten-piece ensemble at The Kitchen, a famous underground performance venue in New York City. "Creatively, I feel like I'm in a really good space," she says of her recent flood of activity. To hear samples of Ibarra's work, check out her Web site, www.susieibarra.com.

As for gear, Ibarra plays a Yamaha Maple Custom kit with wooden rims. She uses Vic Firth 5A sticks and T1 and T3 timpani mallets, and Regal Tip plastic and wire brushes. Her cymbals are all Paiste. "I play their Traditionals line—18" or 20" medium rides, a thin crash, and 13" hi-hats," she says. "But recently Paiste came out with a line called Dark Energy, which is a cross between their Traditionals and Signature lines. These cymbals have such a great response. When you combine the hi-hats, crash, and ride, you get four notes that almost form a blues pentatonic scale. So they're going to be really interesting to work with."

Bill Milkowski

Death Cab For Cutie's

Jason McGerr

Teacher Says So

Autumn de Wilde

Bellingham, Washington's emo band Death Cab For Cutie is as famous for its revolving-door drum throne as it is for recording album after album of critically acclaimed melodic pop. As its fourth drummer in as many albums, Jason McGerr may finally be the "perfect fit behind the kit" that has previously eluded Death Cab. On the band's latest, *Transatlanticism*, McGerr's performance shines, as he blends a variety of feels with rock beats, such as drum 'n' bass.

Before joining Death Cab in 2003, Jason recorded two albums with Seattle's Eureka Farm and kept busy as an in-demand session drummer. "When anyone asks me to be in the studio, I'm always there," he says, "whether it's recording one song or a whole album, or just teching." Jason is also on staff at The Seattle Drum School Of Music, where he's taught for over seven years. "I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now if it wasn't for the school," he says. "It's great, because all the teachers there are also players, and you're constantly feeding off each other. It's a great environment for sharing creative ideas."

Jason's students often include local professionals like Pearl Jam's Matt Cameron and William Goldsmith of The Fire Theft. "These guys come in as great players, but maybe they've hit a wall in their career," Jason says. "They want to get away from playing the same stuff and break out of habits. I've done extensive studying in many different areas, and I think I have a lot to offer. But I learn as much from my students as they learn from me. I've gotten so much from Matt Cameron by just sitting backstage at a Pearl Jam concert. He's *amazing*."

Jason's teaching experience also helped him step into such a well-established gig. "I love to transcribe," he says, "so when I got Death Cab's catalog, I wrote out all of the drum parts so I could play the songs note-for-note. At first, it was hard to make the older songs feel the same for the guys in the band, since several previous drummers had played the parts. There was *a lot* of push and pull. I worked out the parts as close to the originals as I could, but I eventually pulled them into my own feel."

Gail Worley

Tesla's

Troy Luccketta

Now Happening

It's not unusual for bands that enjoyed success during the glory days of glam-metal to still tour today. What *is* rare is finding any of these groups producing new albums that don't sound hopelessly dated. An exception is Tesla, a bluesy, no-frills hard rock quintet that's always favored solid musicianship and songwriting over image.

Maintaining its vintage sound, Tesla nonetheless achieves a modern, heavy feel on its first studio album in ten years, *Into The Now*. Loaded with hook-heavy, classic hard rock, it's a remarkable comeback for Tesla's career.

Lissa Wales

Drummer Troy Luccketta agrees that avoiding trend-identification has kept Tesla's music viable. "We weren't on the covers of most rock magazines in the '80s," he admits, "because we never really possessed 'that look.' Now I think that's worked in our favor. We've been able to survive on our music *alone*, and that's great."

Though they broke up in 1996, Tesla reunited in 2000 for a small-scale tour, the success of which led to an official reunion of all the original members. That tour was documented on 2001's *Replugged Live*. During his time away from Tesla, Troy expanded his drumming palette by studying jazz, funk, and Latin with Dom Moio, whom he calls "a national treasure." The drummer then incorporated all he'd learned into his own private teaching practice, where he stresses the importance of reading and mastering drumming rudiments. And doing clinics at recent major events such as Zildjian Day, the Montreal Drum Festival, and PASIC has helped Troy keep his chops up.

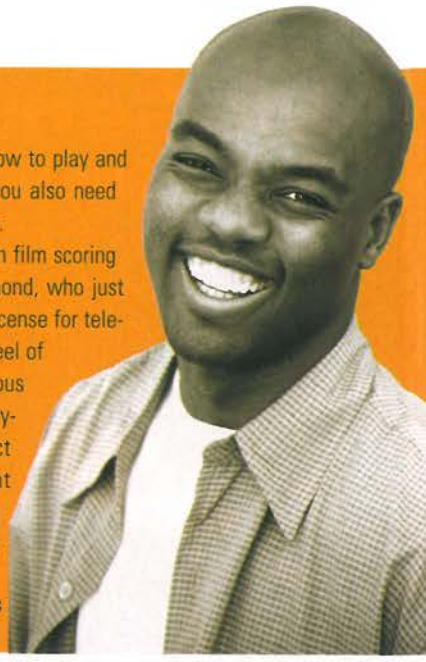
Like one of his primary influences, Jeff Porcaro, Troy's focus in Tesla is on keeping the groove strong. *Into The Now* also finds him playing in odd time signatures, particularly on the title track, which he wrote. "I enjoy experimenting," he admits. "But there's a fine line with Tesla. If I approached my playing from a real progressive point, it wouldn't work. But if I go at it from a hard-hitting, strong groove side, the band relates to it much better."

Overall, Troy is excited about Tesla's future. "*Into The Now* is already getting played on classic rock radio, and we'll be touring all year," he says. "The best is still yet to come."

Gail Worley

Dana Hammond

Tour Drummer Branches Out



Dana Hammond is all about setting goals and working to accomplish them. Even while working with Jessica Simpson and Mandy Moore, and performing and appearing in such high-profile commercials as Faith Hill's recent Pepsi ad, the drummer was thinking about entering the realm of production. Hammond made the decision to take less road work and stay at home to be a more consistent writer and producer.

As a songwriter and producer, Hammond, along with Warren Campbell, wrote and produced the first single for a new Elektra recording artist, Joonie. You can also hear some of his music in the recent flicks *Starsky & Hutch* and *A Cinderella Story*.

"Writing and producing were big desires of mine because I had a dream to do something different," Hammond says. "Then I had to put myself around guys who were already doing that kind of work. A key guy for me was a friend of mine, drummer Cheron Moore, who introduced me to music supervisors and people working in that arena. I've learned a lot. Not only do you have to know how to play and have your musical chops together, you also need to have your *business* chops together.

"I always wanted to be involved in film scoring and source music," continues Hammond, who just completed a collection of pieces to license for television, film, and radio spots. "It's a reel of techno, rock, dance, Latin, and various percussive loops that can be used anywhere. It all boils down to the fact that I love doing a lot of different things. It's pretty exciting to switch gears, wear different hats, and figure out what each job requires."

Robyn Flans

NEWS

...NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...

Chad Wackerman can be heard on three tracks for the Adam Sandler film *Fifty First Dates*. Chad has also recently been working with Korn's Jonathan Davis on the *Wonderland* film soundtrack.

Zoro has returned to the drum throne with Lenny Kravitz. A world tour is in the works.

Terry Bozzio is headed out on tour with guitar legend Jeff Beck.

Little Feat's **Richie Hayward** just finished touring with Bob Dylan, playing double drums with **George Recile**. Hayward is now back on tour with Little Feat, supporting their recent release, *Kickin' It At The Barn*.

Earth, Wind & Fire (with **John Paris** on drums) is slated to hit the road on a double bill with Chicago (**Tris Imboden**).

Steve Sidelnyk has been doing selected shows with Madonna.

Nisan Stewart is on the road with Beyonce.

Tommy Holt is on U.P.O.'s second CD, *The Heavy*, on Nitrus Records.

Kevin Winard is on drums and **Luis Conte** is on percussion on Jeff Elliott's debut solo record.

Louie Bellson and **Sonny Greer** are featured on the Duke Ellington compilation *Masterpieces*.

Billy Cobham is on Frank Gambale's *Raison D'etre*.

Bob Jenkins is on Dropbox's self-titled debut album.

Derek Gledhill is on tour with Smile Empty Soul.

MD contributor **Ed Breckenfeld** is on The Cathy Richardson Band's latest, *The Road To Bliss*. (Check out www.crband.com.)

Brian Sagrafena is on the new Echobrain release, *Glean*.

Chris Vrenna is on Tweaker's new release, *2 A.M. Wakeup Call*.

Don Blum can be heard on The Von Bondies' *Pawn Shoppe Heart*.

Chris Williams is on The Pat McGee Band's *Save Me*.

Jeff Berlin is on the new one by Catie Curtis, *Dreaming In Romance Languages*.

Paul Moschella is on Kate Jacobs' *You Call That Dark*.

Tootie Heath is on his bassist brother Percy's debut as a leader, *A Love Song*.

Tommy "The Gunner" Lodwick is on Dark Shift's debut, *Assault*. He's just returned from a South American tour with the band, as well as the Doomsday Festival in Milwaukee. Tommy's also working on new projects by Nemesis and guitarist Joel Wanasek.

The Allman Brothers Band has released a new double-live CD titled *One Way Out*, with **Jaimoe** and **Butch Trucks** on drums and **Mark Quiñones** on percussion.

Steve Ferrone and **Gene Lake** are part of an all-star team of musicians operating as a session supergroup called Maximum Grooves. They're featured on the band's first release, *Coast To Coast*.

Joe Bergamini has joined legendary prog rock group Happy The Man and will be appearing on their new album, due to be released later this year. He is also still subbing on the Broadway show *Movin' Out*, as well as finishing a book for Warner Bros., *Turn It Up And Lay It Down*. All of Joe's CDs and his two drum books, *Classic Tracks* and *It's Your Move*, are available on his Web site, www.joebergamini.com.

Besides recording, producing, and co-composing music for the film *Lost In Translation*, **Brian Reitzell** has recently recorded with Air, Nikka Costa, Fischerspooner, Paul Aiden, Drew, and Turin Brakes.

Mark Zonder has been working on a new Fates Warning album, as well as recording with Glenn Snelwar and Joacim Cans. Mark has also put together a new band called Alfa-Dog.

David Simmons has been working with The Marley Brothers, Brian Howe, Deborah Gibson, and Lauren Hill.

Brendan Buckley is recording Shakira's follow-up to her English-language debut, *Laundry Service*. In the meantime, you can catch him on Shakira's DVD/CD combo *Shakira Live & Off The Record*.

Marc Jacquelin

Vernell "Dooder" Mincey is on the road with Glenn Lewis.

Les DeMerle is on *Hittin' The Blue Notes Vol. II* on Origin Records. The CD includes liner notes by **Louie Bellson**.

Brad Booker is on Apartment 26's Atlantic Records debut, *Music For The Massive*.

Jim Keltner, **Andy Newmark**, **Henry Spinetti**, **Ray Cooper**, **Alvin Taylor**, **Dave Mattacks**, **Andy Newmark**, **Steve Ferrone**, and **Ringo Starr** are all on George Harrison's CD/DVD box set, *The Dark Horse Years: 1976-1992*. The set includes six of George's solo records from his Dark Horse label, all digitally re-mastered with previously unreleased bonus tracks, plus an exclusive DVD that contains live footage from *Live In Japan* with Eric Clapton's band.

Kenny Livingston is on Sugarcult's sophomore release, *Palm Trees And Power Lines*.

Congratulations to **Tommy Igoe** and his wife, Jessica, on the birth of their twins, Jordan Thomas and Sofia Rose.

To hear some of the artists mentioned in this month's *Update*, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Gone but not forgotten: **Philly Joe Jones** was born on 7/15/23, **Alan Dawson** on 7/14/29, and **Eric Carr** on 7/12/50.

Vanilla Fudge (with **Carmine Appice** on drums) makes their concert debut in New York City on 7/22/67.

On 7/10/69, Jimi Hendrix appears as the musical guest on *The Tonight Show*, with Billy Cox on bass and **Ed Shaughnessy** sitting in on drums.

The original lineup of Led Zeppelin plays its last concert with **John Bonham** on 7/7/80.

Happy Birthday!

Louie Bellson (jazz legend): 7/6/24

Joe Morello (jazz giant): 7/17/28

Ringo Starr (The Beatles): 7/7/40

Butch Miles (swing master): 7/4/44

Jaimoe (The Allman Brothers): 7/8/44

Dino Danelli (The Rascals): 7/23/45

Mitch Mitchell (Jimi Hendrix): 7/9/47

Don Henley (The Eagles): 7/22/47

Michael Shrieve (Santana): 7/6/49

Roger Taylor (Queen): 7/26/49

Simon Kirke (Free, Bad Company): 7/28/49

Andy Newmark (studio great): 7/14/50

Tris Imboden (Chicago): 7/27/51

Stewart Copeland (The Police): 7/16/52

Chet McCracken (Doobie Brothers): 7/17/52

Marky Ramone (The Ramones): 7/15/56

Nigel Twist (The Alarm): 7/18/58

Bill Berry (R.E.M.): 7/31/58

Paul Geary (Extreme): 7/24/61

Jack Irons (Red Hot Chili Peppers): 7/18/62

Evelyn Glennie (percussion great): 7/19/65

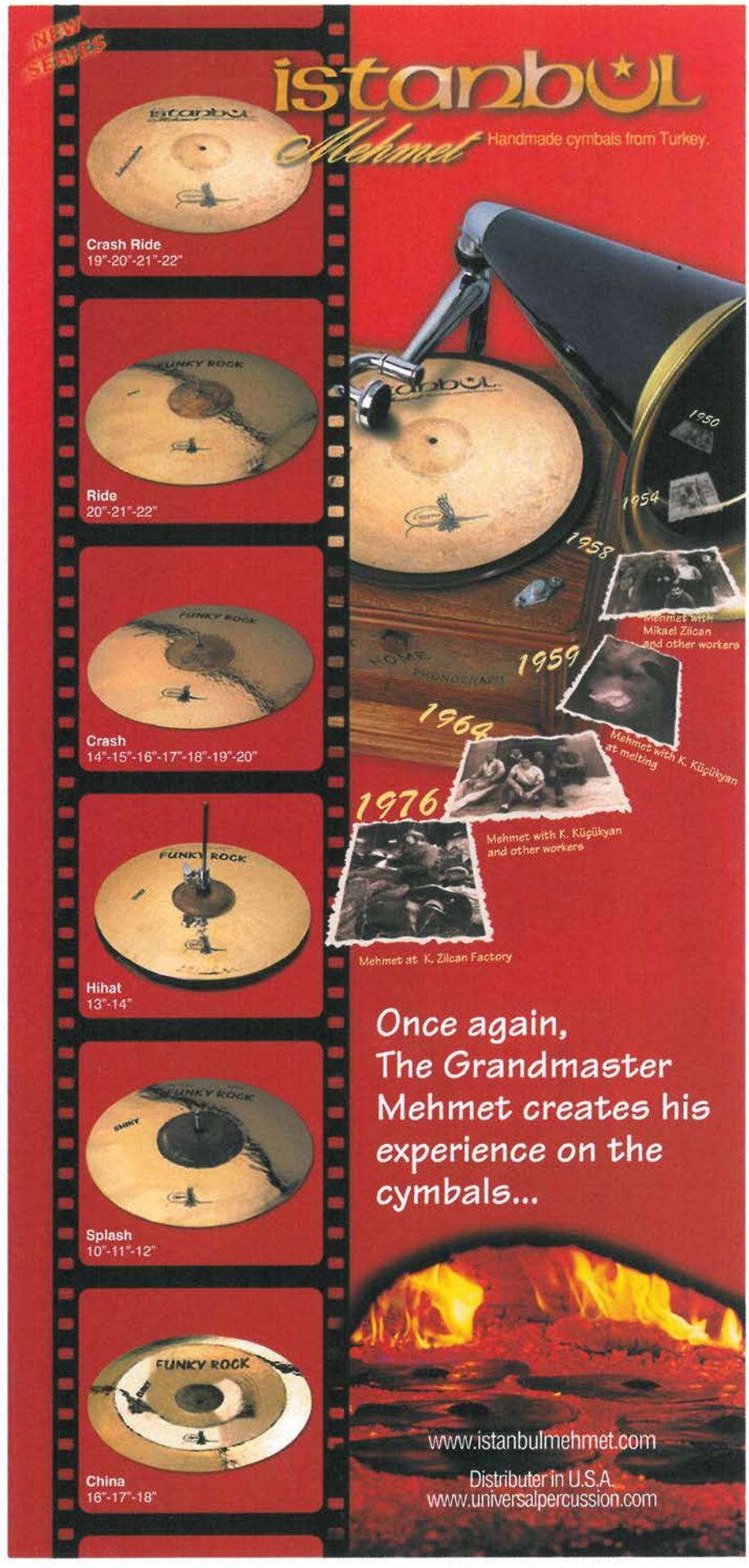
Jason Bonham (UFO): 7/15/66

Chad Gracey (Live): 7/23/71

William Goldsmith (The Fire Theft): 7/4/72

Brad Hargreaves (Third Eye Blind): 7/30/72

Will Champion (Coldplay): 7/31/77



TAMA®

STEFANIE EULINBERG

THE POWER BEHIND KID ROCK

HOLDS FORTH ON BIG VS. SMALL AND MAPLE VS. BIRCH

Talk about change! Stefanie's memorable mammoth maple kit with its twin kicks and signature American flag graphic no longer graces the Kid Rock drum riser. In its place, sits a smaller birch kit with a single bass. What happened?

"The music changed is what happened," explains Eulinberg. "In the beginning, Kid Rock's music was mostly heavy, and a big kit was a huge part of the show. Now we've chilled out and the music styles change constantly." Did she miss the big kit? "Immediately! It looked so cool having this little chick behind this big kit, going for it. But it was ridiculous, too. I'm only about five feet tall, and sometimes all you could see was my forehead! And with the double kicks, I never could get comfortable with the hi-hat, no matter how I angled it. With the smaller kit and single kick, I'm a lot more comfortable—and that makes it easier to groove. I love the sound of big drums, but I'm not sure all that resonance is necessary. In the large venues, our sound guy is going to get a fat tone no matter what the drum sizes. However, I've still got a big 18 x 22 kick. Man, that's a great %$#@$ drum!"

However, a bigger change may be one that's less visible. "When we switched from maple to birch, it was like night and day. I got compliments from everyone. My guitarist, Jason Cross, said, 'Those are the best sounding drums you've ever had.' And he and I have been through quite a few maple sets, even before I signed up with Tama. Maple may be a little too subtle for Kid Rock, where most of what I do is about time. I can see using maple in more chilled situations like playing with Melissa Etheridge where I want to slide into a groove without being over-aggressive. Maple has a tendency to ring just a little bit longer, and it's a little more sensitive than birch. Birch isn't as giving. You have to work to get that sound—but once you get it, it's dialed in and you're good. Birch gives me the right amount of punch and the drums themselves resonate just perfectly."

Starclassic Performer Birch EFX in White Silk
- 18 x 22 Bass Drum
- 8 x 10 Tom Tom
- 9 x 12 Tom Tom
- 11 x 14 Tom Tom
- 14 x 16 Tom Tom
- 5 1/2 x 14 Performer Snare

Hardware
- HH905 Lever-Glide Hi-Hat
- HP900PTW Iron Cobra Double Pedal (not shown)
- HS700W Hi Hat Stand
- HTW79W Double Tom Stand
- HC73BW Boom Stand
- HT730 Ergo-Rider Throne

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Monolith Odyssey Drums

A Return To The Organic

HITS

innovative Accu-vent bass drum venting system adds control

toms produce outstanding sustain

Nexus G2 tom mounts are extremely light

by Rick Van Horn

Monolith Composites is a Canadian company known for its manufacture of carbon-fiber drums and drum racks. They also offer a drum series that combines wood and carbon-fiber shell segments. But until now, they've never made an all-wood drum. That's all changed with the introduction of Monolith's Odyssey series.

Drum Construction

Odyssey shells are 100% American maple. All toms and most snare drums feature 6-ply shells with 1"-wide, 6-ply reinforcement rings. Bass drums are 8-ply with 6-ply rings. Cherry ply snares are available, with 10-ply shells and 10-ply rings.

Monolith has fitted the drums with totally original lugs, in a very stylish "pinched teardrop" design. These solid brass lugs come in chrome, black chrome, satin nickel, polished brass, and gold finishes, or can be powder-coated to custom colors. The lugs are attached to toms and snares with two bolts to help resist head tension. They're attached to the bass drum with single bolts, which allows them to pivot slightly, if necessary, to accommodate movements or irregularities in the tension rods.

This one-bolt design saved the shell of one of our review bass drums when that drum was dropped in shipping. It landed on the edge of one hoop, which was pushed down and sideways by the impact. The drumhead was split, and several tension rods were bent. But the shell itself was not damaged, because the lugs were able to pivot. Had they been mounted by two bolts each, those bolts would have torn loose, most likely gouging the shell around them.

Also unique to Monolith are Nexus G2 tom suspension mounts, which combine a very narrow powder-coated aluminum bracket with a carbon-fiber panel to create the lightest suspension mount in the industry. Aside from lightening your drum cases, these mounts also reduce the transmission of drum vibration even more than most suspension mounts do—thus helping to promote the sustain of the toms. A triangulation to the lower rim also adds stability.

This Antique White Pearl kit is mounted on Monolith's spaceRACK.

The mounting surface on the Nexus G2 is large enough for the customer to choose from a wide variety of receptacles. Monolith provides the drum to this point; the receptacle is the customer's responsibility, although quite often Monolith does the installation for the customer. The Gibraltar units that came on our review kit are the ones most often specified. (Nexus G2 mounts are available as universal-fit aftermarket products for use on any drum.)

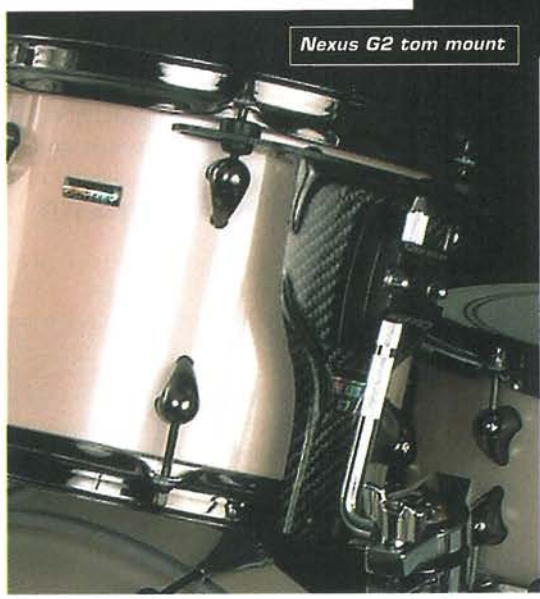
Snare drums and toms are equipped with triple-flanged steel counter hoops. Bass drums come with 12-ply wood hoops that are color-matched to the kit's finish on the outside and natural on the inside. Snare drums are fitted with Ayotte rack & pinion throw-offs and Ayotte butt-end assemblies. Bass drums come with heavy-duty, fold-back telescoping spurs.

Snare drums are fitted with Remo PowerStroke 3 batter heads and Ambassador hazy snare side heads. Toms are shipped with clear Emperor batter heads and clear Ambassador resonant heads. Bass drums are fitted with Superkick batter heads and Regulator resonant heads from Aquarian.

Tom Sound

Suspended toms are supposed to sound big and resonant. We've sort of gotten used to that, to the point where we take sustain and projection for granted. Even with that mindset, I was impressed by the sustain of the Odyssey toms. All of the toms on our "rock" kit—8x10, 9x12, 11x14, and 13x16—were suspended, using the Nexus G2 brackets. Their head combinations gave them plenty of depth, and their maple shells gave them plenty of warmth and roundness of tone. Flawless bearing edges promoted good attack (even considering the clear 2-ply Emperor batters). If you want a big drum sound, these babies will deliver.

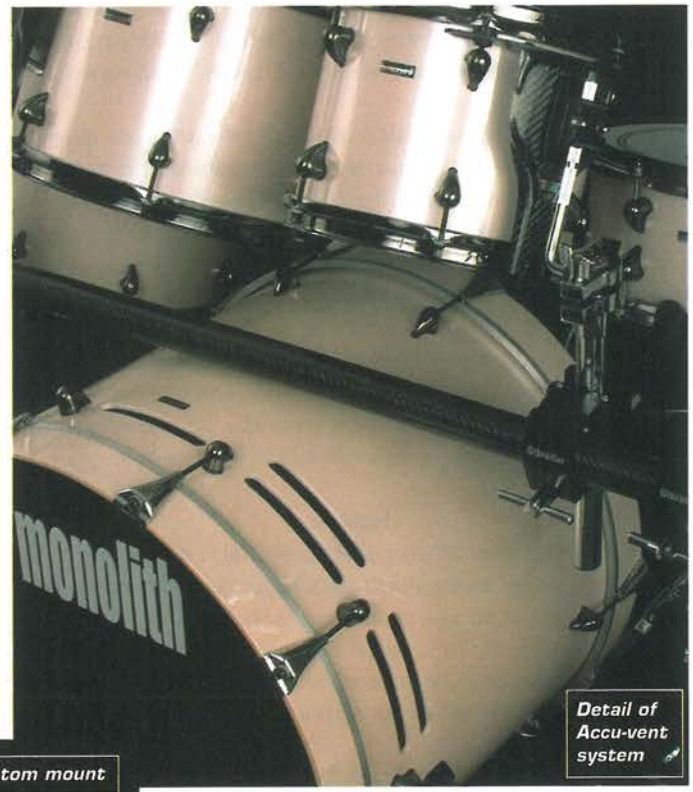
The 8x10 and 14x14 toms on our smaller review kit had the same acoustic character as those on the larger kit—allowing for pitch differences attributable to their sizes. If anything, they sounded bigger than you'd expect (when really walloped), while still being responsive to delicate playing. Very nice.


Nexus G2 tom mount

Snare Sound

Both of the snare drums we reviewed were 5½x14 models, equipped with the same heads. So their acoustic performance was virtually identical (a tribute to Monolith's manufacturing consistency).Their PowerStroke 3 heads provided a certain built-in overtone control, but the drums didn't lack for projection. They both offered the best characteristics of maple-shell drums: warmth, roundness of tone, and melodic adaptability. They also had very good dynamic range and sensitivity.

The Ayotte throw-offs make these drums particularly versatile, since they have the ability to hold snare tension at any point, from all the way off to all the way on. (It's not an either/or situation.) Thus the drums could instantly go from a loose, N'awlins fatback sound to a crisp, cutting punk character, and anywhere in between. The accommodating nature of maple shells makes this a particularly appealing feature.



Detail of Accu-vent system

Accu-vent Bass Drums

Both of our review kits came with bass drums that featured Monolith's Accu-vents (available as a no-charge option). These are slotted vents that are strategically sized and placed in the bass drum shell. The number of vents varies depending on the size of the shell, as well as on the intended application. Three or five vents are available in 20" drums; 22" and 24" drums are offered with five or nine.

Our 18x22 review drum came with nine vents. From an acoustic standpoint, it had a lot of attack, but not a lot of low end. (According to Monolith, five vents in a 22" drum leaves more traditional "boominess.") But the nine-vent option is specifically intended for a drum that is to be miked up. More importantly, it's intended for a drum that is to be miked *internally*. The idea is to retain the tonal benefits of a full front head and no added internal muffling, without losing the punchiness and control of a ported head. To this end, our test drum came fitted with Monolith's Nexus B1 mic' mount (which is available as an aftermarket item for any drum). It attaches to several lug bolts inside the shell and holds a microphone in a shock-mount in the center of the drum.

We evaluated the drum using two different microphones: an Audix D-6 and an Audio Technica AE2500. Each mic' provided its own nuances to the drum's sound through our PA system. But with either mic' we were able to get a tremendously clear, deep, and powerful sound. And that sound was completely controllable, without the need for additional internal muffling.

The Aquarian heads controlled over-ring, and the Accu-vents allowed the right amount of air to escape to provide punchiness and attack.

Additionally, since the microphone was inside the drum, and the mic' cable came out through a special grommeted hole in the bottom of the shell, there was nothing visible to reveal how the drum's sound was created. That's a nice aesthetic feature, if not a critical one. I like a clean-looking drumkit without a lot of mic' stands and cables obscuring the audience's view of it.

The bass drum on our small review kit wasn't fitted with a mic' mount, so we evaluated it more on the basis of its acoustic sound. That sound was actually bigger and boomier than that of its 22" sibling, owing to the smaller number of vents—three, in this case. Still, it was a *controlled* boominess, even with an unported front head and no internal muffling. This drum would hold its own in any situation where a full-bodied, unmiked sound was desired.

When we put an Audix D-6 a foot in front of the drum—just for fun—that 20" kick sounded *huge* through our sound system, without losing its punchiness. It was the sort of sound that engineers love, and that makes drummers happy because they can get it from a small, portable drum.

Finishes

Monolith offers many different color options. Most standard laquer finishes contain a pearlescent element that allows the drum to maintain its color but picks up on ambient or projected colors to give the shell a deeper, richer radiance. Our large review kit came in an Antique White Pearl finish that fell somewhere between off-white and café-au-lait. This finish, in combination with black-chrome hardware, gave the kit a classy, subdued appearance.

The smaller kit featured a Natural Pearl finish with a high-gloss clear coat, along with chrome hardware. Call it "traditional" if you like, but it was beautifully done, and it gave the kit a warm, attractive look that would be appropriate on any gig.

This jazz-sized kit features a Natural Pearl finish.

SpaceRACK

Although it isn't the focus of this review, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Monolith's carbon-fiber spaceRACK, which supported our large review kit. I reviewed this rack system when it was first introduced several years ago, and I feel the same way about it now. At $23.50 per foot, carbon-fiber rack pipes are more expensive than steel pipes. But they're about 80% lighter, while being every bit as strong. Take it from someone who had to undergo back surgery after years of lifting heavy equipment: If you're a rack user, or are considering becoming one, you should definitely investigate carbon-fiber.

Conclusions

I've reviewed Monolith's carbon-fiber drums, and I'm familiar with the company's penchant for innovation and construction quality. They've applied that penchant to their new Odyssey maple series, and the results are impressive.

Our big review kit would serve well in any live or recording situation, given its easily controlled-yet-powerful bass drum, and its rich, resonant toms. And our small review kit was the kind of versatile set that surprises you with unexpected power and "bigness," yet still retains the warmth and dynamic range that you expect from maple shells. For their first time out of the wood-drum gate, I'd say that Monolith has a winner!

THE NUMBERS

8x10 tom	**$ 430.00**
9x12 tom	**$ 480.00**
11x14 tom	**$ 550.00**
14x14 tom	**$ 550.00**
13x16 tom	**$ 600.00**
18x20 bass drum (available with Accu-vents at no charge)	**$ 720.00**
18x22 bass drum (available with Accu-vents at no charge)	**$ 840.00**
5½x14 snare drum	**$ 530.00**
Four-piece shell pack (options: 20" bass, 10" rack tom, and 14" mounted or legged floor tom, or 22" bass, 12" rack tom, and 16" mounted or legged floor tom, with or without Accu-vents)	**$2,399.00**
Five-piece shell pack (options: 20" bass and 14" mounted or legged floor tom, or 22" bass and 16" mounted or legged floor tom, with or without Accu-vents)	**$2,799.00**
Six-piece shell pack (options: 20" or 22" bass drum, mounted or legged floor toms, with or without Accu-vents)	**$3,399.00**
Nexus G2 suspension tom mount	**$ 44.95**
Nexus B1 internal mic' mount	**$ 89.95**
L-shaped spaceRACK (includes five mounting clamps)	**$ 859.00**

(905) 689-6173, www.monolithdrums.com.

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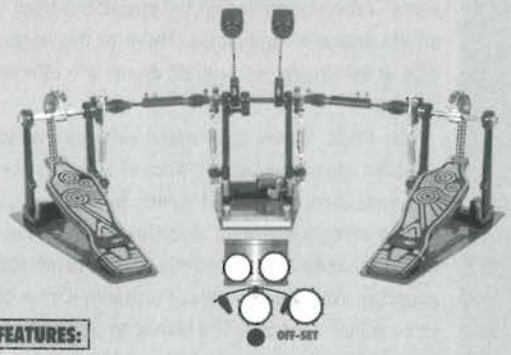

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- *Double springs driving each pedal for increased response, sensitivity and balance*
- *Hard-soft mallet heads*
- *Heavy -duty u-joints and dust covers*
- *More energy efficient shorter drive shafts*
- *Spring loaded anti-skid screws on both pedal housing and beater housing*
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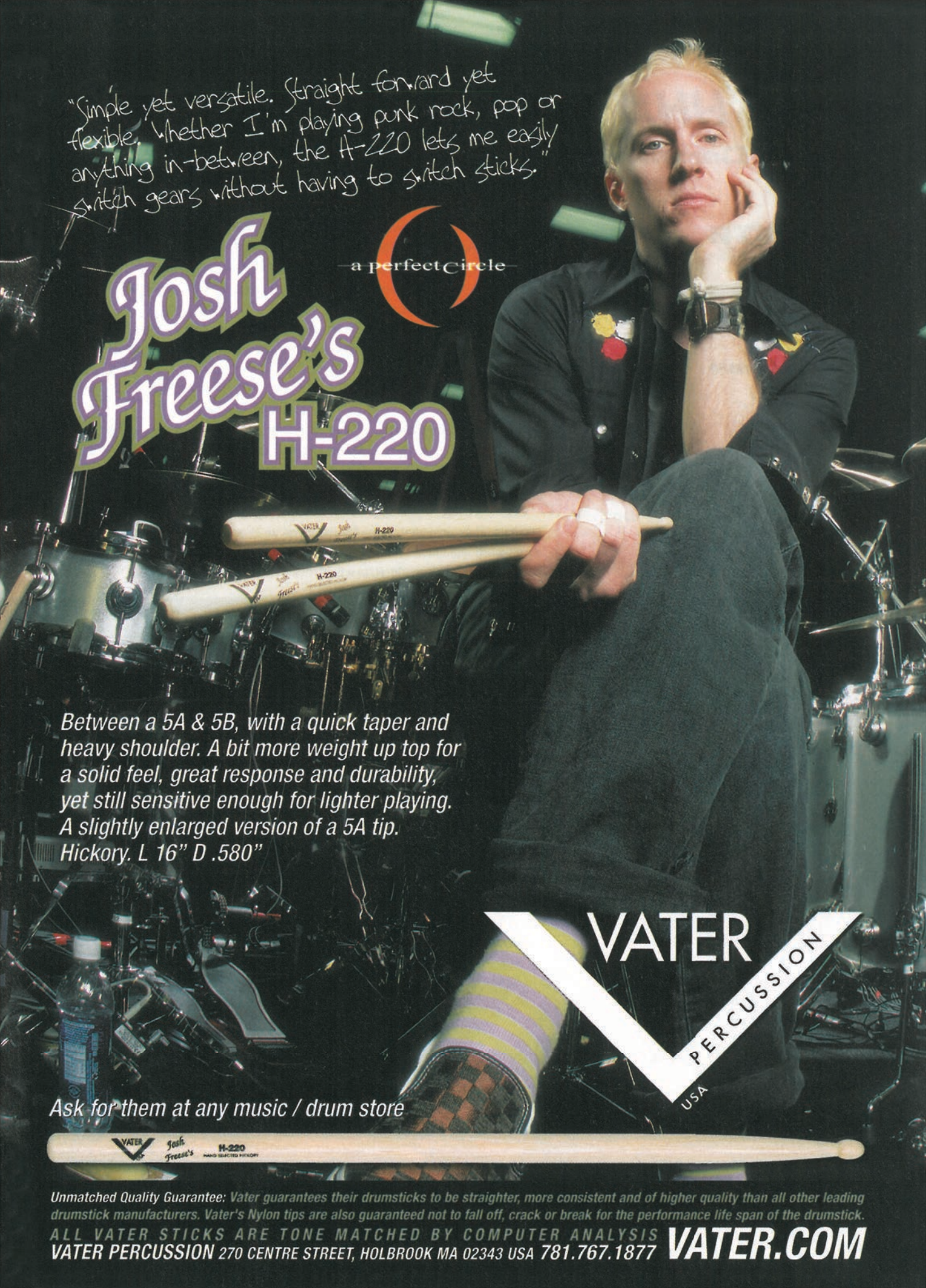
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Sabian HHX Manhattan Jazz Cymbals

Towering Darkness

HITS

extremely player-friendly

hi-hats produce good, clear chick

16" and 18" crashes are very versatile

by Will Romano

Manhattan. The very name conjures up the frenetic energy of hot jazz on 52nd Street, the reverberations of traffic, reflections in mirrored buildings, and steam rising from the bowels of the city. With its HHX Manhattan Jazz series, Sabian attempts to recreate the feel of "old school" jazz, while pouring all of the aforementioned sensations into its new molten metal platters.

Over the past few years, Sabian has displayed an admirable willingness to take chances. But can they really capture the vibe of a smoky uptown joint in "the city that never sleeps"? Let's find out.

Thin Is In

Our review batch included 13" and 14" hi-hats, 16" and 18" crashes, and 20" and 22" rides. Upon first glancing at these cymbals, I noticed that they were not as heavily hammered as their HHX cousins are. I was also struck by how ultra-thin they were, as if Sabian was following the Atkins diet for cymbalmaking.

Sabian's pinpoint lathing process creates deep, circular lines on the surface of these cymbals. They reminded me of the ridges on an LP record, or the rings around Saturn. It's an outward indication of how beautifully complex these cymbals are. Still, looks can only get you so far in this world. How would they perform?

A Smooth, Comfortable Ride

In order to test the ride cymbals, I removed my second rack tom and placed the ride to my front right side. Through an economy of motion and the cutting-through-butter-with-a-hot-knife feel I experienced when playing the 20" and 22" cymbals, I enjoyed a comforting and comfortable "ride." I also switched to longer, thinner, and lighter sticks (hickory, with ball tips), which I believe helped to bring out the true essence of the ride cymbals. Though I generally prefer rides of brighter texture, the Manhattan series' dark sound was very seductive. The cymbals were also very sensitive, responding well to even the lightest touch.

Playing these rides simply felt good. I was not busting my gut to get a rhythm out. Instead, the sticks just seemed to roll off these delightful metal dishes. I was blissfully maintaining a swingin' groove, swept away by the sonic storm of billowing, shimmering sound waves.

From A Whisper To A Scream

The 16" and 18" crashes were vastly different from the rides. The thin 16" crash produced a short spritz of sound. (Imagine a quick squeeze of a garden hose nozzle.) I set the cymbal to my right and smacked it at will, resulting in quick explosions and hissing decays. Sabian states that the design of the Manhattan Jazz crashes, including the pinpoint lathing process, achieves "a controlled spread." This was verified by the performance of the 16" crash.

The 18" crash possessed more sonic heft. When I gave it a good whack, layers of rich overtones blended to become what sounded like—fittingly enough—a taxicab horn reverberating through crowded city streets. The 18" reached sonic heights that the 16" simply could not. This might be counted as a plus or a minus, depending on the setting. The cymbal's tonal richness was undeniable.

I also tried using both crashes as crash/rides (as Sabian suggested could be done). The 18" was more than sufficient for quick runs, but the 16" was too flat and unexciting for my taste. Conversely, Sabian also believes that the crashes can double as splashes. I found this to be half true. The 16" offers a viable alternative by approximating the decay of a splash. The 18" is another story. One might describe its crash sound as "splashy," but it's simply too big and powerful to actually serve as a splash cymbal. In the heat of battle, I don't want to have to pull back to get a splash cymbal's traditional tiny splatter.

No Resistance, No Problem

The 13" Manhattan Jazz hats knocked me out. According to Sabian, the oval hammering dents that cover their surface add to their lightness of sound. And the 13" hats *were* very light. They sounded a lot softer than I'm used to, and I felt virtually no resistance when stepping on the pedal and closing the hats on 2 and 4. But I was caught off guard by the strong, clear "chick" that these babies produced. It was very well defined, and it provided a great counterpoint to the sprawling sonic winds produced by the ride cymbals.

The 13" hats also helped me address my fear of the technically demanding aspects of jazz. I found that I was playing quick triplet swing feels with a little more ease and authority than usual. Was it the cymbals themselves, or something that they contributed to my mindset? I'm not sure, but I'm willing to give the cymbals the benefit of the doubt.

The 14" hats were slightly darker and a bit louder than their smaller siblings were. They produced an almost muffled, rustling-leaves sound when I played them slightly open. Though they didn't have as much presence as I thought they would, I nonetheless liked the way they responded to a quick snap of the wrist. Their "chick" was also clear, and was complementary to the ride cymbals.

Mystery Ending

Sabian insists that the B20 alloy formula used in casting the Manhattan Jazz cymbals (80% copper and 20% tin, with traces of silver) is nothing new. So why and how this series has the capacity to deliver silky yet sonically explosive performances remains a mystery. Luckily, we drummers are not tasked with figuring out the secrets of the universe. All we do is bang on stuff.

If you play hard bop, fusion, or any form of jazz, these player-friendly cymbals offer a great range of sonic options. I may not have been around to experience the golden age of jazz in New York City, but I believe that these cymbals would delight those who were. They're not the cheapest cymbals in town. (They are hand hammered, after all.) But they just might be the ones for you.

THE NUMBERS

16"	Crash	$295
18"	Crash	$347
13"	Hi-Hats	$432
14"	Hi-Hats	$490
20"	Ride	$399
22"	Ride	$475

(506) 272-2019, www.sabian.com.

Potyondi Signature Series Cast-Iron Snare Drum

Talk About Your Heavy Metal!

HITS

excellent sensitivity and response

very expressive

distinct harmonics

seamless, machined design

MISSES

weight could be an issue for some

by Martin Patmos

Potyondi Custom Drums, based in Brantford, Ontario, Canada, specializes in custom snare drums made of aluminum, bell brass, stainless steel, copper, cast iron, and other metals. While other manufacturers also make metal snare drums, what makes Potyondi snares unique is the fact that each drumshell is individually machined, not rolled or spun. This results in a seamless, one-piece shell that is uniformly thick and perfectly round. It also results in superior strength, along with even tone across the drum. Available design options include diameter, depth, hardware, venting, and finish.

From The Iron Age

The model we were sent for review was a 5½x14 Signature Series Cast-Iron drum with an acid-wash finish. I noticed the drum's considerable weight before I even unpacked it. When I actually put it on a scale, it weighed approximately 25 lbs. For comparison, I weighed my late '80s Ludwig 6½x14 Black Beauty. It tipped the scale at a dainty 10 lbs.

So the Potyondi drum is far heavier than the average metal snare of its size. I wasn't sure what to make of this at first, but after further examination of the drum's design and construction, it made sense. The manufacturer states that their drums will not crack or break, and I believe them.

Given the drum's unusual weight, I would definitely recommend a sturdy, double-braced stand. As for bringing it on the road, you or your roadie will have the added bonus of working on an extra little arm definition each night.

Fit And Finish

The Cast-Iron snare is an original design by Peter Potyondi, and it's quite impressive. The 10 mm (⅜")–thick shell is a flawless, smooth cylinder with a sharp 45° bearing edge. In my search for any sign of irregularity, I found nothing but the production number inside.

The acid-wash finish on this drum is especially distinctive. According to Peter, the finishing process takes about a week and a half. It involves applying twelve cups of acid, which is then neutralized, after which the shell is wet-sanded before receiving a clear coat. This gives the drum a rich, walnut-brown color, with subtle shading variations and some faint sanding scratches that play across the surface. Besides the acid-wash finish, cast iron drums are also available with a natural machine finish, as well as other custom options.

The drum is fitted with eight tube lugs, triple-flanged hoops, and a Nickel Drumworks strainer. These combine to help the drum tune up easily and quickly. A tasteful badge finishes everything off.

Sensitive, Crisp, And Singing

The cast-iron shell, Aquarian heads, and a 42-strand set of snare wires gave the Potyondi drum an extremely sensitive and musical responsiveness. The overall sound was focused, with a distinct attack and a crisp snare sound, supported by a pleasant ring. The tone and harmonic blend that the drum emitted were especially musical and singing. Moving from the center of the head towards the rim added harmonics and ring, while the sound remained consistently crisp.

As an experiment, I tried damping the ring of the drum somewhat. While it still sounded great, I preferred the controllable yet lively natural sound of the wide-open drum.

The drum also had an impressive dynamic range, from the faintest taps to the loudest whacks. This sensitivity and responsiveness made for a wonderfully expressive instrument. I found it excellent for playing jazz chatter with mixed dynamics, as well as laying into it on 2 and 4.

As you might expect, the cast-iron snare delivered a superior ringing rimshot, with an even, smooth decay. Cross-stick playing was equally effective, sounding a sharp, solid knock amidst the drum's distinct harmonics. With these sounds at my disposal, it wasn't long before I found myself forgetting about "jazz" or "rock" distinctions, and instead just playing the drum alone and enjoying its performance.

Conclusion

With its distinct sound and excellent sensitivity, the Potyondi Signature Cast-Iron snare would do well in most musical scenarios. It would obviously be useful in a studio, and could easily handle live situations from rock to jazz, and even symphonic work. While its weight could be an issue for some, this would really only depend on how often you set up and tear down. Ultimately, I found the Cast-Iron snare to be an engaging and responsive instrument with a nice harmonic series and a crisp, singing sound.

If cast-iron isn't your choice of metal for a drum, Potyondi has lots of other options for their hand-made snares. A straightforward page on their Web site allows you to email them for a price quote on a custom drum. While Potyondi drums are currently only available through the company's site, they should be available in some music stores soon.

THE NUMBERS

5½x14 Signature Cast-Iron snare with acid-wash finish.....$1,050 (Canadian)
(US price will fluctuate with exchange rate. Price at press time approximately $775.)
(519) 756-7706, www.potyondi.com.

Quick Looks

Pro-Mark Pro-Round Series Sticks

Round-tip drumsticks have become more popular in recent years, and customers haven't been shy about making their preferences known to the manufacturers. In response, Pro-Mark now offers three of their most popular stick sizes—7A, 5A, and 5B—in round-tip versions.

But the manufacturer didn't just take existing sticks and slap rounded tips on them. They did their homework, experimenting with different lengths so that the new sticks would emulate the response and balance of the original models. As a result, the 7A and 5B Pro-Rounds are slightly longer than their standard-tip counterparts, while the 5As are the same length.

I used a pair of the Pro-Rounds during the run of a local show. They had fine balance and response, and were uniform in the cymbal tones they produced, which were pingy and very articulate. I also prefer round tips for practice-pad or concert-snare work, where that same articulation is a plus.

The sticks also felt great in my hands. They're made using Pro-Mark's proprietary Millennium II process, which applies an environmentally friendly, non-toxic finish that's said to make them more consistent and less sensitive to moisture. It certainly makes them easy to hold on to. All three models carry a retail price of $11.95 per pair. **(877) 776-6275, www.promarkdrumsticks.com.**

Chap Ostrander

Stagg Cymbals

Chinese Contender

HITS

excellent acoustic variety

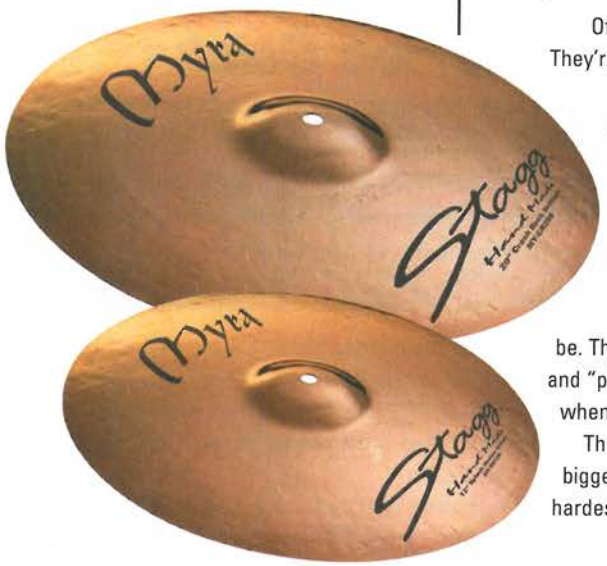
EXO line offers unique sounds

affordable student models

by Norman Arnold

Stagg is a relatively new brand of cymbals manufactured in mainland China. They've been in the European market for a while, but they just entered the US in a big way this past January. The line offers a large variety of cymbals for players of all styles, playing levels, and budgets.

All of Stagg's cymbals are cast from B20 alloy—a mixture of 80% copper and 20% tin. Then they're hammered and lathed by hand, according to "old-world" manufacturing methods. Considering that cymbals have been made in China for literally thousands of years, "old-world" takes on a whole new meaning in this case. We were sent representative models from several of Stagg's current lines.



Myra Series

Of all Stagg's cymbals, the Myra series are the loudest and most aggressive-sounding. They're designed for the demanding rock player.

The 12" Myra medium brilliant splash is very strong, and sounds as loud as an actual crash cymbal. It's a perfect rock splash, in that it's thin enough to create a "splash" sound, yet has enough power to cut through. Stagg also offers 8", 9", 10", and 11" splashes.

The 17" Myra brilliant crash should be plenty loud for the hardest-rocking band. It generates a big, bright sound with plenty of cut. The bell is also particularly bright, and could easily be used as a different ride sound.

The 22" Myra brilliant ride is very precise and focused, like a good rock ride should be. The combination of hammering and lathing on this cymbal gives it a nice blend of warmth and "ping." The bell should satisfy the heaviest rocker; its sound is really piercing—especially when played with the butt of a stick.

The 14" Myra hi-hats are perfectly matched to the other cymbals in this set. They have a bigger and brighter sound than most regular hi-hats, and would certainly be an asset to the hardest rockers.

DH Series

The DH Series offers cymbals with earthy sounds and complex overtones. Extra hand hammering and the availability of six different weights and models should assure plenty of choices for everyone. The sounds of the DH cymbals are generally much darker than those of the Myra series, and would likely be favored by jazz drummers, world-music players, and rock drummers looking for variety. (I really liked this collection myself.)

The DH series also includes special EXO (for exotic) models. These cymbals are made visually distinctive by the unfinished look of their bells. The 14" EXO hammered medium-thin crash has a dark, cool sound and a very fast response. The 11" DH brilliant splash is brighter but still warmer than the Myra splashes. It makes for a good combo with the 14" EXO crash. These cymbals would sound great as part of a studio kit.

A 17" EXO crash and an 18" Rock crash round out the DH crashes we tried. The 17" EXO is a very warm crash—perfect for studio work or with an acoustic set. The unfinished bell provides a great look, and it isn't as bright-sounding as the bells on the other series. The 18" Rock crash would easily work for a variety of musical styles. It's brighter than the 17" EXO, so the two complement each other nicely.

DH 12" medium splash and 14" heavy hi-hats

DH 18" EXO crash and 20" EXO heavy ride

The 21" DH EXO ride is a thick, heavy cymbal. Its overtones are a bit subdued, creating an "earthy" sound. It's a very dynamic cymbal as well. It can be played gently, with good articulation, but it can also be played really hard without developing too much ring. And its unfinished bell is great.

The hi-hats in the DH series also come in a variety of sizes and styles. Our review sets were the 13" Fat hi-hats and the 14" brilliant model. Both sets sound solid, crisp, clean, and bright. I wished that we'd been sent a set of EXO hi-hats as well. I like hi-hats to be crisp, and we certainly had crisp hi-hats to choose from. But I think it would be great to have a darker set to match the overall tone of the other EXO cymbals. Of course this is just personal preference.

Furia Series

Stagg describes the Furia series as being "inspired by the sounds of the ocean and the forces of nature." The design of the cymbals incorporates a special combination of hand hammering and detailed lathing. The lathing creates a "rim" around the outer portion of the cymbal. It's visually interesting, and it works well with the brilliant finish to generate the distinctive sound of this series.

The 16" and 18" brilliant Furia crashes are really great together. I was able to get an interesting range of sounds from both. They both have a bright, hard-edged sound when crashed, while the thickness and weight of the 18" model would allow it to serve well as an alternate ride. The lightly lathed bells on both cymbals also offer unique sonic opportunities.

The 20" Furia brilliant ride has a very large bell with a piercing ping, which helps it to generate unique overtones. Hi-hats in a 13" size round out the range. They blended well with the other models in this series, creating a cohesive sound.

SH Series

The 10" SH splash and 18" and 19" SH crashes that we tried were very "mature"-sounding. That is, they had a familiar, almost traditional sound. They were darker than some may like, and they didn't have a penetrating edge—even though they were designated as "Rock" models. But I think that's what makes them worth comparing to more expensive "traditional" models from other brands.

Cymbal Sets

Cymbal Sets from Stagg offer several value-priced options to beginning players, as well as to working drummers not yet ready to invest in top-of-the-line choices. DH and SH sets each contain 14" hi-hats, a 16" crash, a 20" ride, and a cymbal bag. The DH set also includes a great-sounding 10" splash, making it an especially attractive package. And for students, there's a budget-priced YR set (not reviewed here), which also includes 14" hats, a 16" crash, a 20" ride, and a cymbal bag.

Conclusion

When I started drumming, there were only two real choices for cymbals. Today, there are many more. Whether you're a student drummer just starting out, or a pro looking for acoustic variety, Stagg is a new choice worth serious consideration.

SH splashes

THE NUMBERS

Myra Series

12" Splash	$125
17" Myra Crash	$170
14" Myra Rock Hi-Hats	$325
22" Myra Rock Ride	$450

DH Series

11" Splash	$ 95
14" EXO Crash	$115
17" EXO Crash	$195
18" Rock Crash	$210
13" Fat Hi-Hats	$265
14" Hi-Hats	$265
21" EXO Ride	$345

Furia Series

8" Splash	$ 90
16" Rock Crash	$210
18" Rock Crash	$230
13" Rock Hi-Hats	$290
20" Rock Ride	$320

SH Series

10" Splash	$ 65
18" Rock Crash	$155
19" Rock Crash	$170

Cymbal Sets

DH Set	$715
SH Set	$585
YR Set	$375

(All sets include 14" hi-hats, a 16" crash, a 20" ride, and a cymbal bag. DH set also includes a 10" splash.)

(615) 793-8787, www.emdmusic.com.

Carbonlite Carbon-Fiber Cymbal Boom Arms

A Quick Way To Lighten Up

HITS

significantly lighter than all-steel versions

functional and durable

by Rick Van Horn

I've said many times how important I think it is to lighten one's load when it comes to drum hardware. One way to do that is to use a drum rack instead of several cymbal stands, with their heavy, double-braced tripods. A further step is to use a carbon-fiber drum rack that features ultra-light legs and horizontal tubes. Now Carbonlite (who makes such drum racks) has gone yet another step, by introducing carbon-fiber cymbal boom arms.

The arms themselves are solid, ½"-diameter, gloss-black carbon-fiber rods, tipped with die-cast metal ratchet-style cymbal tilters. The arms can be used as part of a complete boom assembly, or can replace existing ½"-diameter steel boom arms from other manufacturers. According to Carbonlite, besides being lighter, the vibration-damping effect of the carbon-fiber arms serves to isolate cymbals for reduced vibration transfer and improved cymbal sustain.

Carbonlite boom arms are available in 11"- and 17"-long versions, with or without a ¾"-diameter steel base tube (to complete the boom arm assembly). The base tube has a "hideaway" design, meaning that the boom arm can slide into the base for transport or for use as a straight stand. The base features separate adjustments for tilting and extending the boom.

I had two major questions about these new boom arms. First, were they enough lighter than their steel counterparts to justify their use (and cost)? Second, were they as strong and durable as steel arms?

The Weight Factor

To answer my first question, I compared a Carbonlite boom arm assembly (including base tube and 17" arm) to similar assemblies from three other major manufacturers. The base tubes were essentially all the same weight, so any differences were due exclusively to the boom arms.

The complete Carbonlite assembly weighed 34 oz. The carbon-fiber arm alone weighed 12¼ oz. The lightest steel boom assembly weighed 45 oz.; the heaviest weighed 51 oz. The lightest steel arm alone weighed 22 oz.; the heaviest weighed 28 oz. So the weight savings with a complete Carbonlite assembly ranged from 11 to 17 oz. Using a carbon-fiber boom arm alone saved from 9¾ to 15¾ oz.

If you only have a couple of cymbals on your kit, these differences may be negligible. But if you have a large kit—especially one on a rack, with lots of cymbal boom arms—the weight savings can add up pretty quickly. For example, I currently use six complete boom assemblies and six individual boom arms on my rack setup. And they happen to be of the heaviest brand from my comparison. If I were to replace all of them with Carbonlite assemblies and individual arms, I'd reduce the weight of my hardware case by over twelve pounds!

The Strength Factor

I was a little concerned about the strength of the carbon-fiber arms, because the material can be brittle. But I was assured by Tim Greene of Carbonlite that the inherent strength of their solid-rod design would measure up to that of a steel rod. As a torture test, I put a 17" medium crash cymbal on the 17" arm, and extended that arm out as far as it would go, putting as much weight as possible on the opposite end. Then I proceeded to repeatedly wallop that cymbal over several practice sessions. The arm held the cymbal firmly, with no appreciable "wobble," and gave absolutely no indication of any risk of breakage. I was impressed.

Final Thoughts

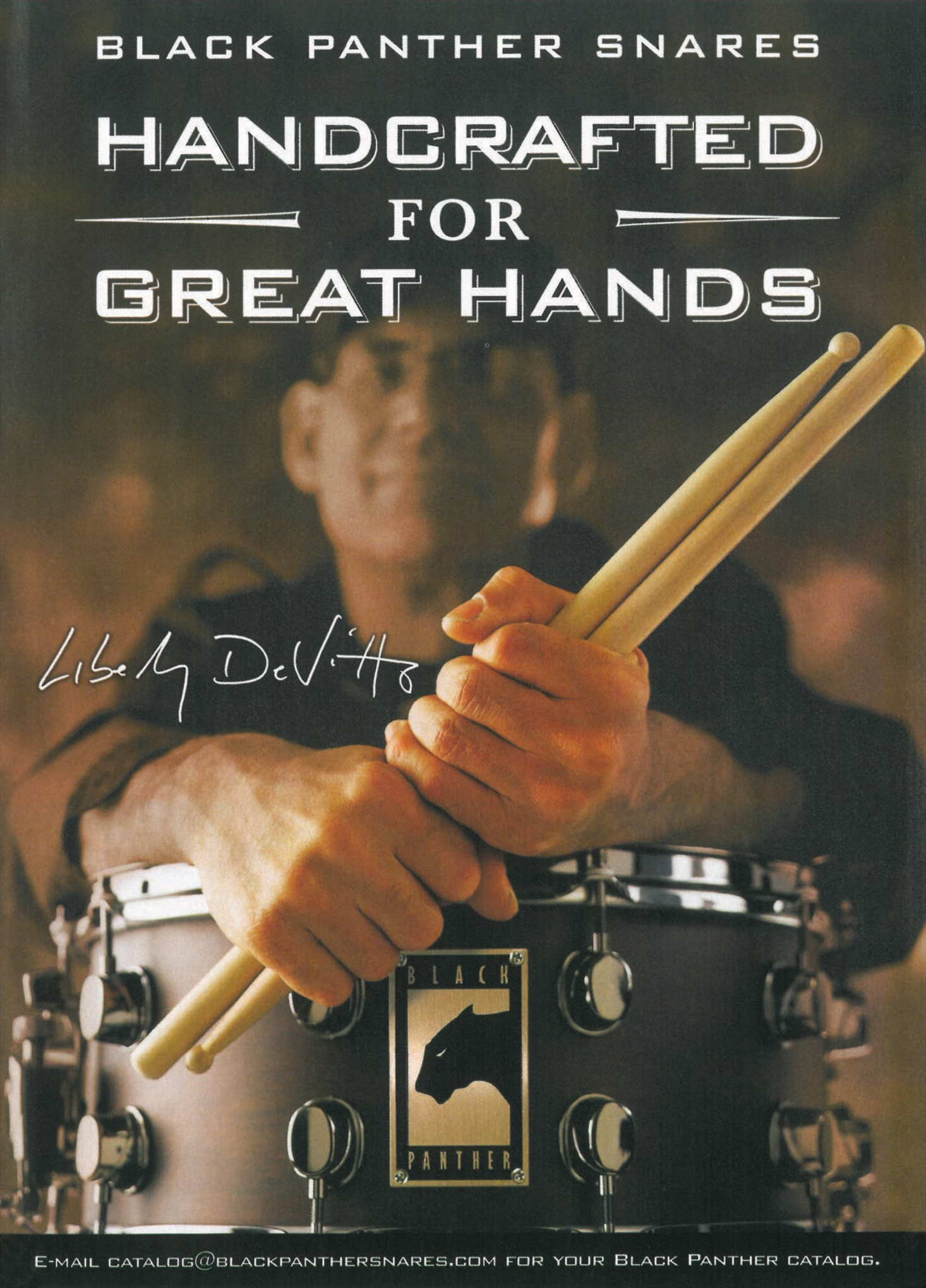
The Carbonlite boom arms don't come with memory locks, because the manufacturers felt that such locks would negate the pack-up convenience of the "hideaway" design. But standard ½" memory locks can be ordered for an additional $4.25 each by anyone who wants to use them in order to simplify a complex setup. Also, remember that the boom arms are available separately, and thus could be retro-fitted into regular tripod-style boom stands as well as boom-arm assemblies.

Technology can sometimes be overrated. But in the case of Carbonlite's carbon-fiber boom arms, I think real progress has been made. It's tantalizing to think that complete lightweight stands might not be far behind.

THE NUMBERS

11" Boom arm	$42
11" Boom & base tube	$57
17" Boom arm	$46
17" Boom & base tube	$61

(727) 742-2263, www.carbonlite.com.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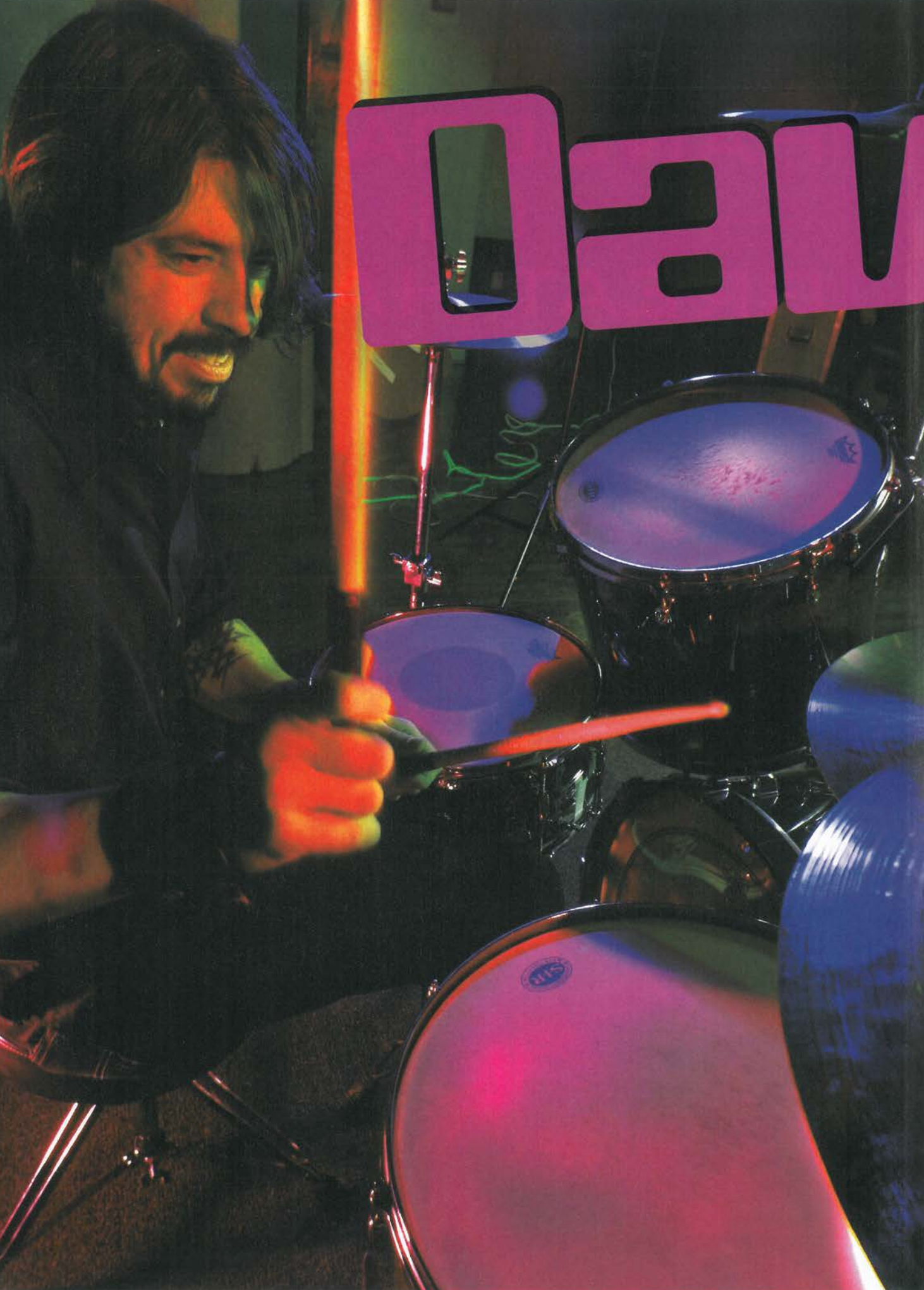

Dav

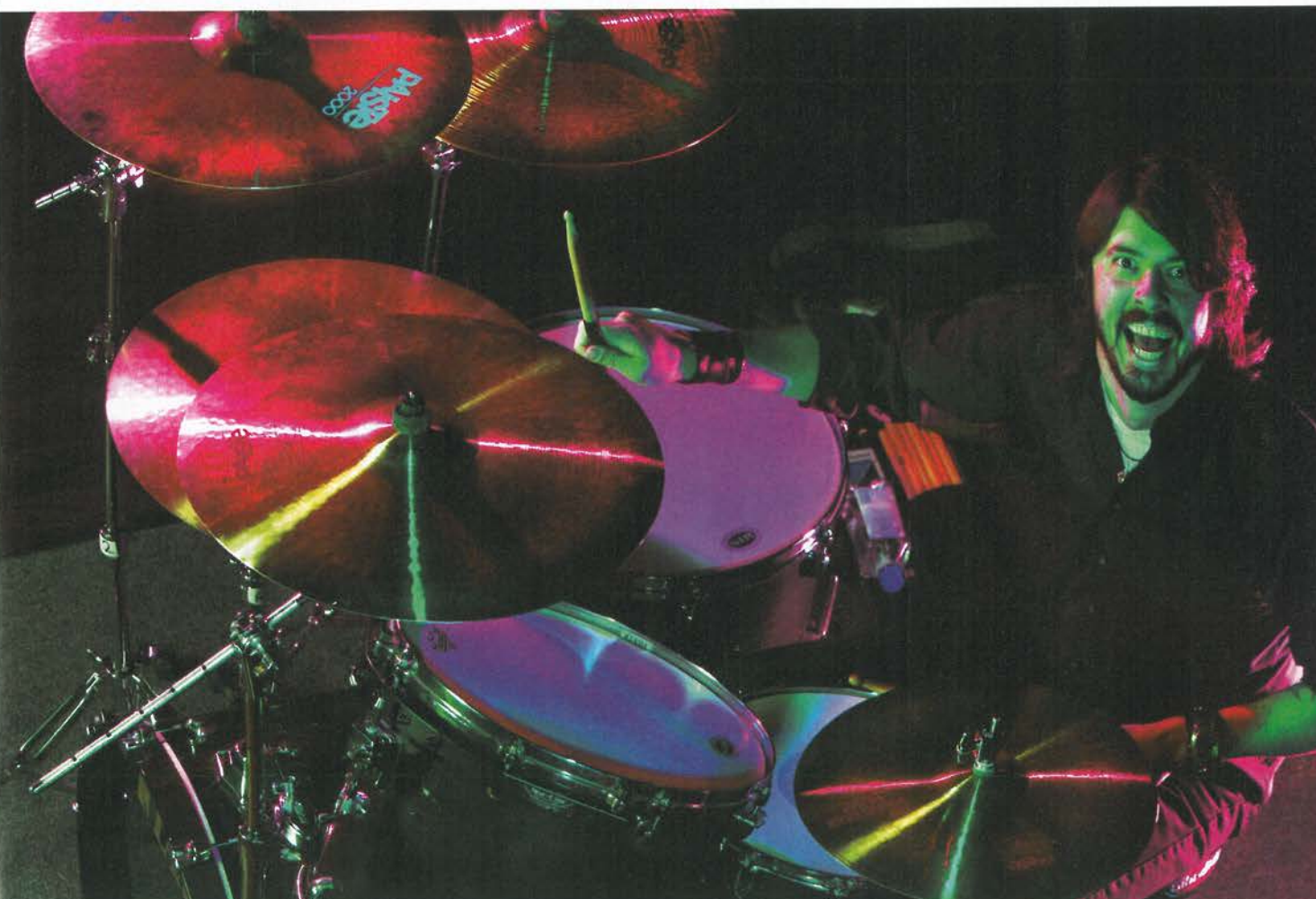
Dave Grohl

Returning To His Roots With Probot

Story by Ken Micallef

Photos by Paul LaRaia

Many drummers have hit it big since the post-metal resurgence of the early '90s. But no one has had the impact and influence of Dave Grohl. With the full-body flam and bass drum contortions of Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit," Grohl forever changed drumming, turning Muppet-like heavy metal caricatures into what Grohl himself calls "a drummer's sport." There had been pummeling protagonists of the drums before, but none exacted his level of pop craftsmanship, instinctive technique, and innovative song interpretation.



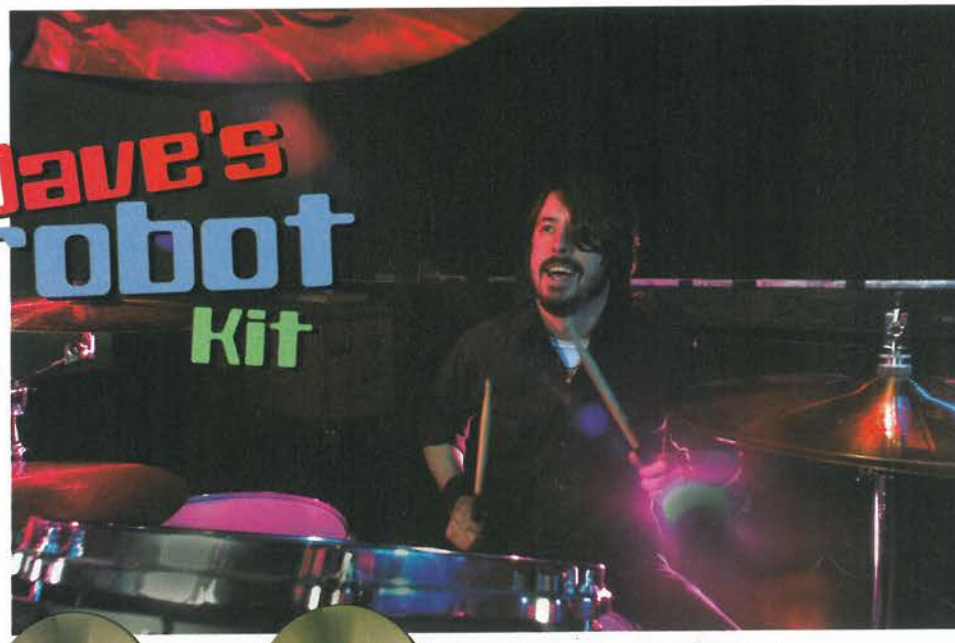
Today, with the all-Grohl supergroup Probot, Dave returns to the drums with a vengeance. The molar-flashing Virginia native has once again confirmed his status as one of the most intuitive, musical, and creative drummers of this generation. He's also proving to be a quick-witted musician unafraid to follow his heart's ambition.

Popularizing the now ubiquitous quiet/loud formula with Nirvana, Grohl supported the moody and often manic songs of Kurt Cobain with a style that crossed the classicism of a Ringo Starr with the head-goring aggression of Grohl's hardcore heroes, Kent Stax, Bill Stevenson, Dave Lombardo, and Earl Hudson. Add a love of Tony Thompson, D.C.'s go-go funk scene, and one of the goofiest grins in rock, and you have Dave Grohl's recipe for success.

But drumming was never enough for Grohl. With Nirvana's premature end, he founded pop-rockers Foo Fighters, eventually handing drum duties over to the very capable Taylor Hawkins. The band has sold millions of records and even grabbed a Grammy.

Foo Fighters' third album, *There Is Nothing Left To Lose*, left Grohl searching for meaning beyond pop hooks and ear-shredding volume with sweet songs like "Learn To Fly." With a new lease on his rock 'n' roll soul, Grohl and The Foos recorded *One By One*, but he yearned for a return to his hardcore drumming roots. Searching for sustenance, Grohl did sessions with Reeves Gabrels, Killing Joke, Tony Iommi, and Tenacious D. With hardcore roots still calling, Grohl put all his energy and considerable drumming muscle into Probot.

Dave's Probot Kit

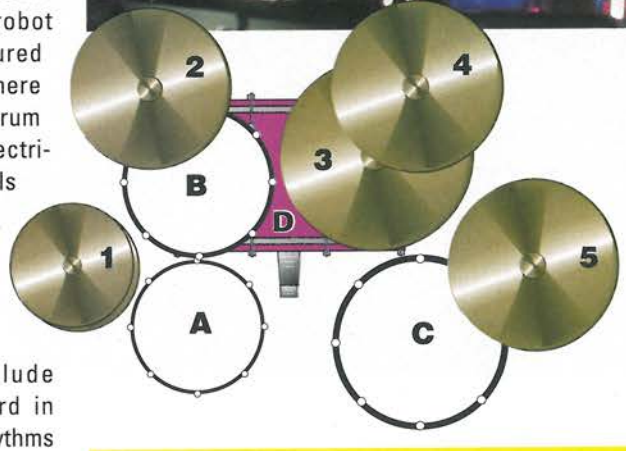


Grohl's two-fisted tribute to the '80s hardcore canon, Probot was conceived, performed, and produced entirely in his Virginia basement studio. What began as casual tracks laid down to Pro Tools over a couple of beers soon became a full-blown metal mission. Recruiting his vocal heroes from such currently lost-in-the-wilderness bands as Motörhead, Mercyful Fate, Venom, Sepultura, and Voivod, Grohl created a skull-crushing blowout that is irony free and seriously song-structured. As always, his unerring musicality turned what could have been a collection of novelty one-offs into a gripping gala of pounding stoner rock.

At a recent *Headbanger's Ball* performance, Grohl and the assembled Probot "band" stomped through "My Tortured Soul," one of a handful of tracks where the drummer's implied double bass drum trickery and all-or-nothing energy electrified the SRO audience. Probot reveals Dave Grohl in all his drumming glory, from the introductory double bass stampede of "Red War" to the closing Gothic fog and ice bell ambience of "Sweet Dreams."

Other hardcore highlights include the toxic tom executions heard in "Shake Your Blood," the speedball rhythms of "Access Babylon," the flying dinosaur dynamics of "The Emerald Law," and the agitated, neck-snapping suspense of "Dictatosaurus." Throughout the album, Grohl lays down the kind of signature parts that will make air drummers the world over shout, "Beat it with your fist, Dave!"

Similar, but more metal-pop funky, Grohl also drummed on Queens Of The Stone Age's breakout 2002 album, *Songs For The Deaf*. Using unorthodox recording techniques and his full arsenal of tom-truncheoned grooves, full-set triplet rollovers, and roaring flam punctuations, Grohl again created a template for rock drumming that will be scoured, studied, and followed for years to come. Obviously, Dave Grohl is back at the drums in a big way.



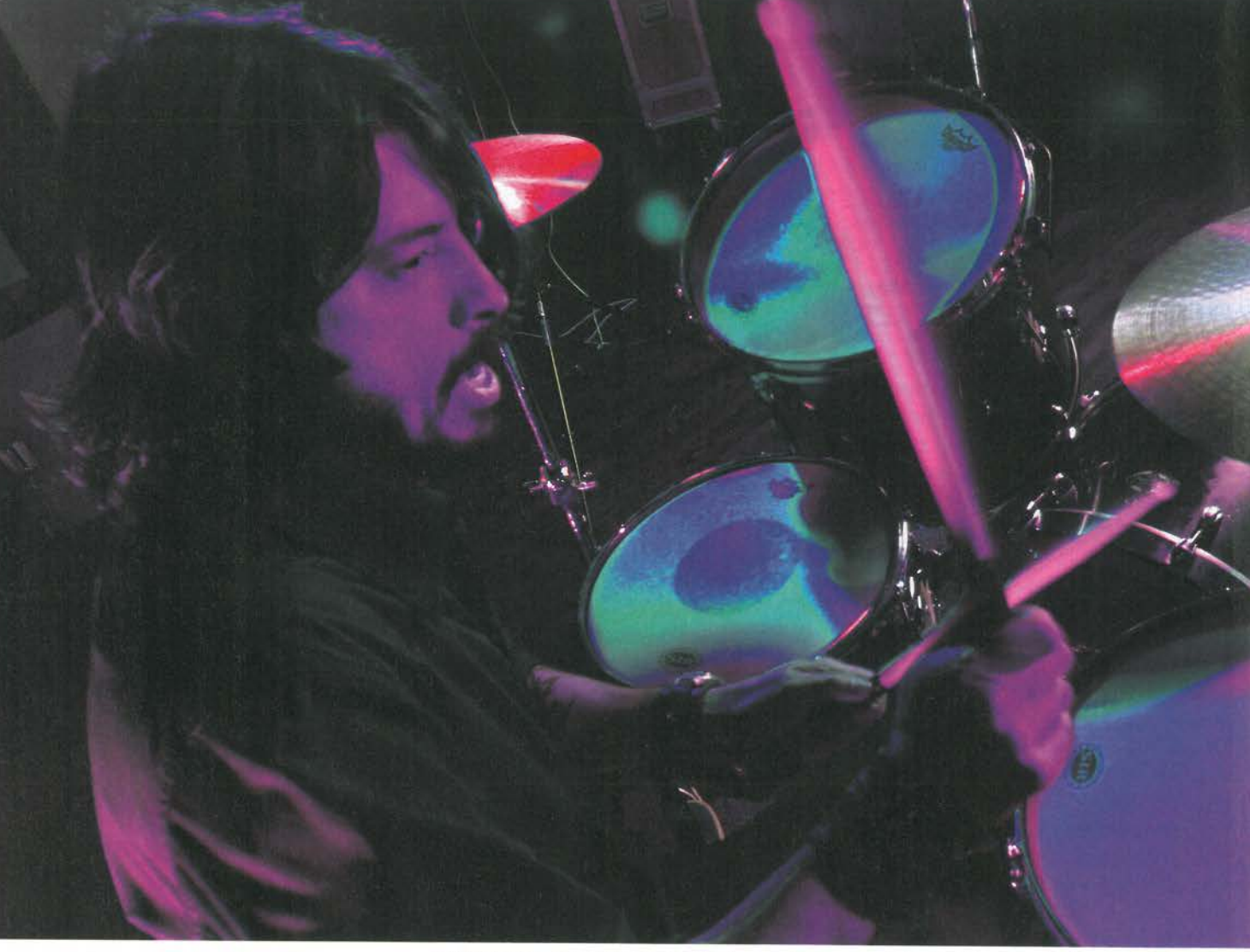
Drums: Tama Starclassic
A. 6½x14 Ludwig Black Beauty snare
B. 13x16 mounted tom
C. 16x18 floor tom
D. 16x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Paiste
1. 14" 2002 heavy hi-hats
2. 19" 2002 Power crash
3. 22" 2002 ride
4. 20" 2002 Power crash
5. 20" Sound Formula crash

Sticks: Zildjian 5B (hickory with wood tip), Ahead stick wrap, Zildjian drum gloves

Foo Fighters' guitar/drum tech BB on tuning, setup, and what Grohl really wants

"Dave uses coated Remo Emperors on all batter heads, and he prefers a small kit. He wanted to go with Paiste cymbals this time, mostly from their 2002 series. His goal was to mimic John Bonham's setup. I tried to tune all the drums as low as possible without them being flubby or mushy sounding. I cranked up the bottom heads but kept the top heads really slack. And it doesn't matter what I do on the snare—Dave cranks that up. With the big bass drum, if it's the slightest bit tight the monitor will start vibrating the heads, so you want to keep the bass drum heads loose. And Dave always uses drum gloves when he plays because he has the most acidic sweat on the planet."



"Playing from the heart and soul is more important than playing for trophies and speed."

MD: When you returned to the drums for Probot, was there a moment when you realized your dream was becoming a reality?

Dave: The whole thing started in January of 2000, after The Foo Fighters made *There Is Nothing Left To Lose*. That was our first record where we really started focusing on low-level dynamics, acoustic sounds, and songs that moved from verse to chorus without surrendering to that quiet-loud dynamic. In '99, rock music was becoming a victim of dynamics. I had a lot of ideas and I wanted to see where the melody took the songs rather than where the distortion pedal could take them.

We started writing as a group in my studio in Virginia, and the songs stemmed from jams. But it was pretty mellow. Then on tour I would pop in a Sepultura record or Slayer's *Reign In Blood* before hitting the stage. I would listen to that music to get pumped up to play "Learn To Fly." So I started questioning the direction I was taking with my music. I love that era of Foo Fighters music, but having grown up listening to hardcore punk rock, underground metal, and really fast, sinister music, it seemed strange that it was absent from anything else I was doing.

MD: Had you lived out your singer/songwriter role?

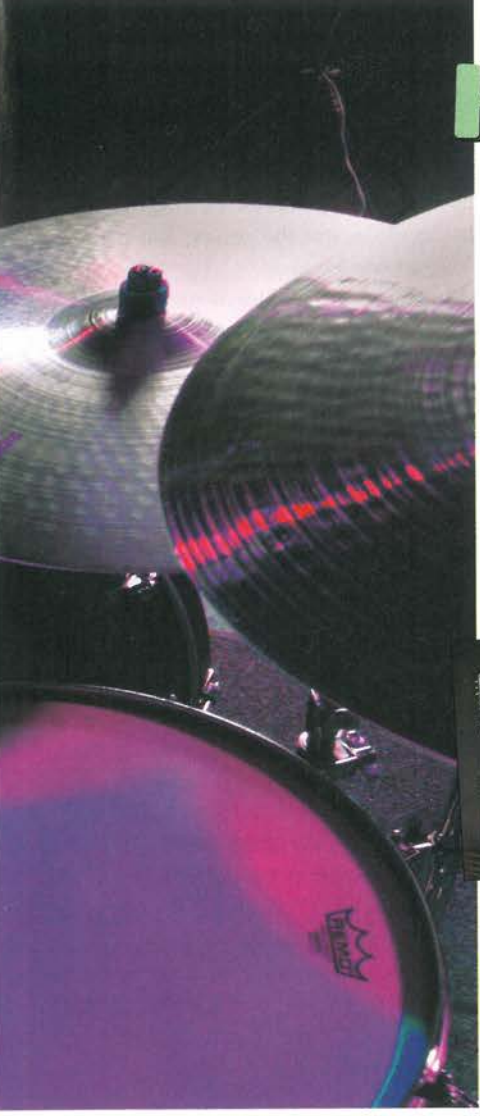
Dave: It was all about challenging myself. I hated the sound of my voice and I questioned everything: my guitar playing, my songwriting, and especially my drumming. To strip it all bare was a real test.

MD: So what does Probot represent?

Dave: Probot is just me going back to my roots because I needed to prove to myself that I still had that music in me.

MD: When did you first start listening to hardcore and metal?

Dave: I started listening to underground American hardcore in 1982. I had a relative that turned me on to punk rock, and by '84 I was completely immersed in it. That scene was totally independent and underground. I had my own fanzine, and I started a band. It really instilled that "DIY" [do it yourself]



Hardcore Hearing

Grohl's Best Recordings

Artist	Album
Nirvana	Nevermind
Nirvana	Incesticide
Nirvana	In Utero
Foo Fighters	Foo Fighters
Foo Fighters	The Colour And The Shape
Foo Fighters	There Is Nothing Left To Lose
Foo Fighters	One By One
Queens Of The Stone Age	Songs For The Deaf
Scream	Fumble/Banging The Drum
Scream	Live At The Black Cat: 12/26/1996
Tenacious D	Tenacious D
Killing Joke	Killing Joke
Probot	Probot

Faves

Artist	Album	Drummer
Scream	Banging The Drum	Kent Stax
Scream	Still Screaming	Kent Stax
Scream	This Side Up	Kent Stax
Slayer	Reign In Blood	Dave Lombardo
No Means No	Mama	John Wright
No Means No	Sex Mad	John Wright
No Means No	Small Parts Isolated And Destroyed	John Wright
Bad Brains	Rock For Light	Earl Hudson
Descendents	Milo Goes To College	Bill Stevenson
The Power Station	The Power Station	Tony Thompson
Chic	all	Tony Thompson
Minor Threat	Out Of Step	Jeff Nelson
D.R.I.	22 Songs	Eric Brecht

ethic. I started discovering bands like Venom, Motörhead, Slayer, and Mercyful Fate, bands that were similar to hardcore in that the aggression, rebellion, and energy of the music was still there, but they were even nastier.

MD: Did you study the drummers in those bands?

Dave: Oh yeah. That's how I learned to play drums. I learned from listening to my favorite albums. I would put on Rush's *2112* and try to play with Neil Peart. But then, as I listened to hardcore and metal, I realized it was a drummer's sport. I was really into Earl Hudson [Bad Brains], John Wright [No Means No], Jeff Nelson [Minor Threat], and Dave Lombardo [Slayer]. I would learn all of their licks verbatim. And I didn't even have a drumset!

This may sound dumb, but I had a chair that was next to my bed, and I would kneel down on the floor and put a pillow between my legs to use as my snare. I would use the chair to my left as the hi-hat and use the bed as toms and cymbals. And I would play to these records until there was condensation dripping from the windows.

I borrowed some marching sticks from a friend of mine. I don't even know the size, but they were huge. I would use those to play along with Bad Brains' *Rock For Light* and D.R.I.'s *22 Songs*. I listened to *Reign In Blood* and tried to get my right hand to match Dave Lombardo's ride cymbal. Eventually, when I got on the drums with normal sticks, I broke everything. I was so used to playing on pillows that had no rebound to them.

MD: How long did you play along with records?

Dave: A couple of years during high school in Springfield, Virginia. My mom was a vocalist in the '50s and my father was a classically trained flautist. My mom was in a band called The Three Belles. They toured around and did vocal contests, performing a cappella '50s stuff.

Not only was all the hardcore music inspirational to me, I was listening to bands like Trouble and checking out how amazing their arrangements were. In order to play along with these songs, I would memorize all the arrangements and compositions, and eventually the idea of those patterns started making sense to me. I started seeing arrangements as Lego blocks, something not musical, but more of a visual thing. When I imagine an arrangement, I don't know anything about time signatures. I couldn't tell you if something is in 5/4 or 4/5.

MD: How do you approach a song like Queens Of The Stone Age's "Hangin' Tree," which is in 5/4?

Dave: I do it by ear and hear it in my head as something that I "see." I picture arrangements as blocks, basically. But I never count in my head. I just kind of find these markers and fit the blocks within that. I don't count when I play, and it's hard for me to understand the mathematics of time signatures.

MD: How did you come up with the hi-hat swoop on the end of the bar and the other parts of the beat on that tune?

Dave: The drum riff basically mirrors the bass riff. A lot of the time I will base a drum

riff on how a guitar riff is being played. I'll imagine the lower notes on the guitar as representing the floor tom and kick drum and the higher strings as representing snare and cymbals. If you listen to that bass riff, it's basically the same as the snare-kick pattern.

MD: So you follow the guitar line very closely.

Dave: Yes, almost to where the two become one. It makes it more powerful, and one doesn't necessarily stand out over the other. They represent the same riff. Plus I'm big on hi-hat swoops.

Using the hi-hat correctly can accent parts better than crash cymbals sometimes. Like in "No One Knows," the hi-hat swoop alludes to the shit-kicking line dance groove. When I first heard Queens' demo of the tune, the beat was really straight. It was 4/4, kick/snare, up and down. Throwing in that extra swoop at the end of the phrase gave it a little more swing. And "Hangin' Tree" is basically a snare/kick/floor tom pattern mirroring the guitar riff and then bringing it back into the groove for the verses, putting in accents here and there with minimal fills and making sure the song rolls.

I like to feel that songs are rolling like gears in an engine, that everything clicks in the patterns and certain pieces of the gear meet at certain times and then disappear, eventually coming back together again. When you think about it, each limb has its own time and its own rhythm and falls into place with your other limbs.

"A priority of mine is making people want to 'air drum' along to my playing."

MD: So your drumming is written like a song or in parts?

Dave: Yes, it's just like an arrangement. Composition and songwriting should be just as important to a drummer as they are to a singer. Music is about—well not *all* music—but there are hooks in songwriting, those moments that catch you and stick in your brain. Drumming should be the same way. I've never been a technically outstanding "wonder kid" drummer. I just do things that complement the songs, and that's all I've ever wanted to do.

MD: But you play a lot of rudiments, especially four-stroke ruffs around the toms. That seems to be one of your trademarks, and it works so well. And your drumming has a presence; it's very physical but always controlled. It's like you have an inner compressor.

Dave: A lot of that comes from playing in Scream, the band I was in before Nirvana. We were hardcore but we would also play songs that had simulated reggae beats, and we'd play "Magic Carpet Ride" and "Green Eyed Lady" at breakneck speed. You had to give it dynamics. I never had monitors; we hardly ever had a PA system. You had to manage it with stage volume.

It's that whole thing where if you're recording drums at home by yourself with one microphone, you have to "equalize" your playing. That's the only way you can get a decent recording out of one mic'. You

Size Matters.

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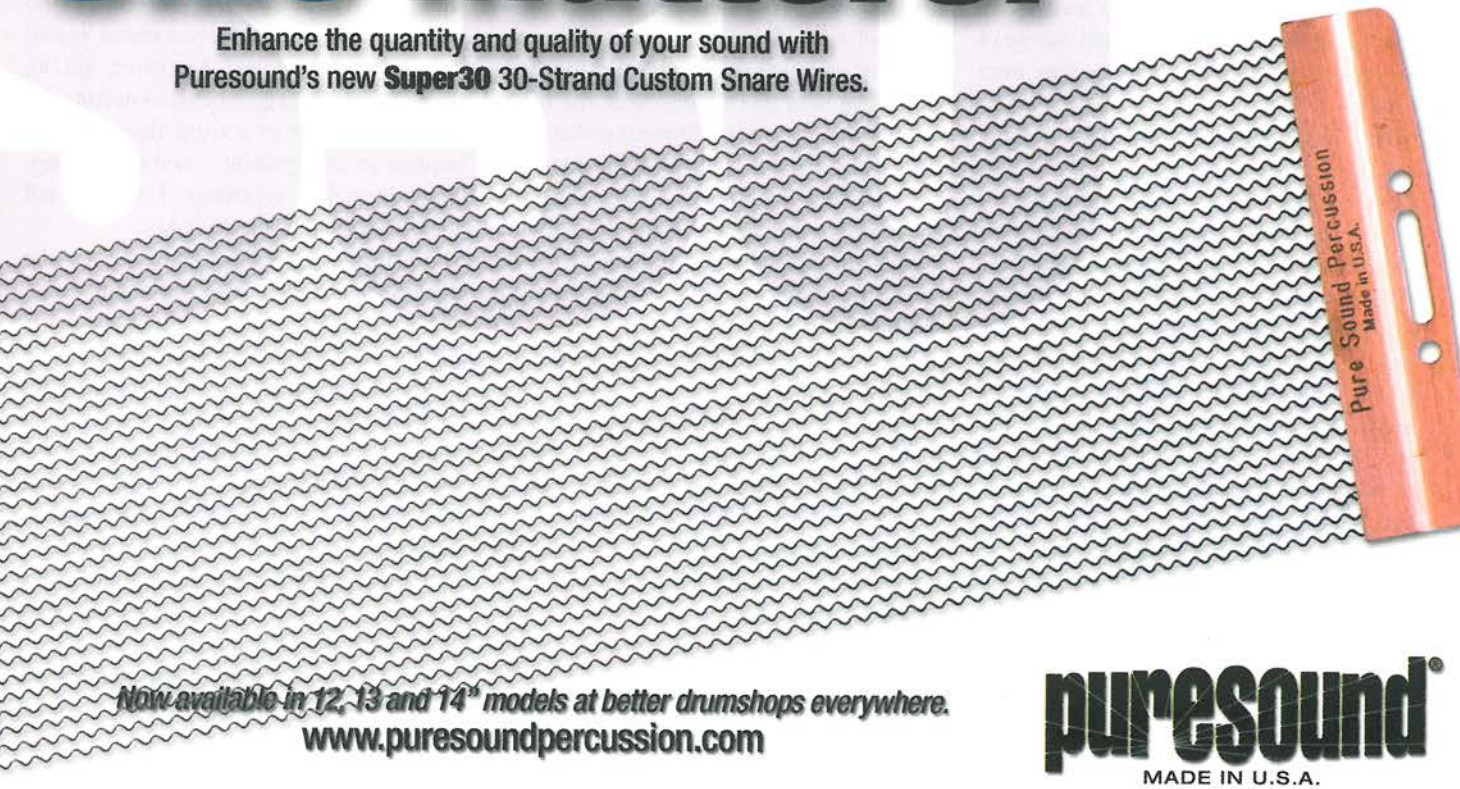

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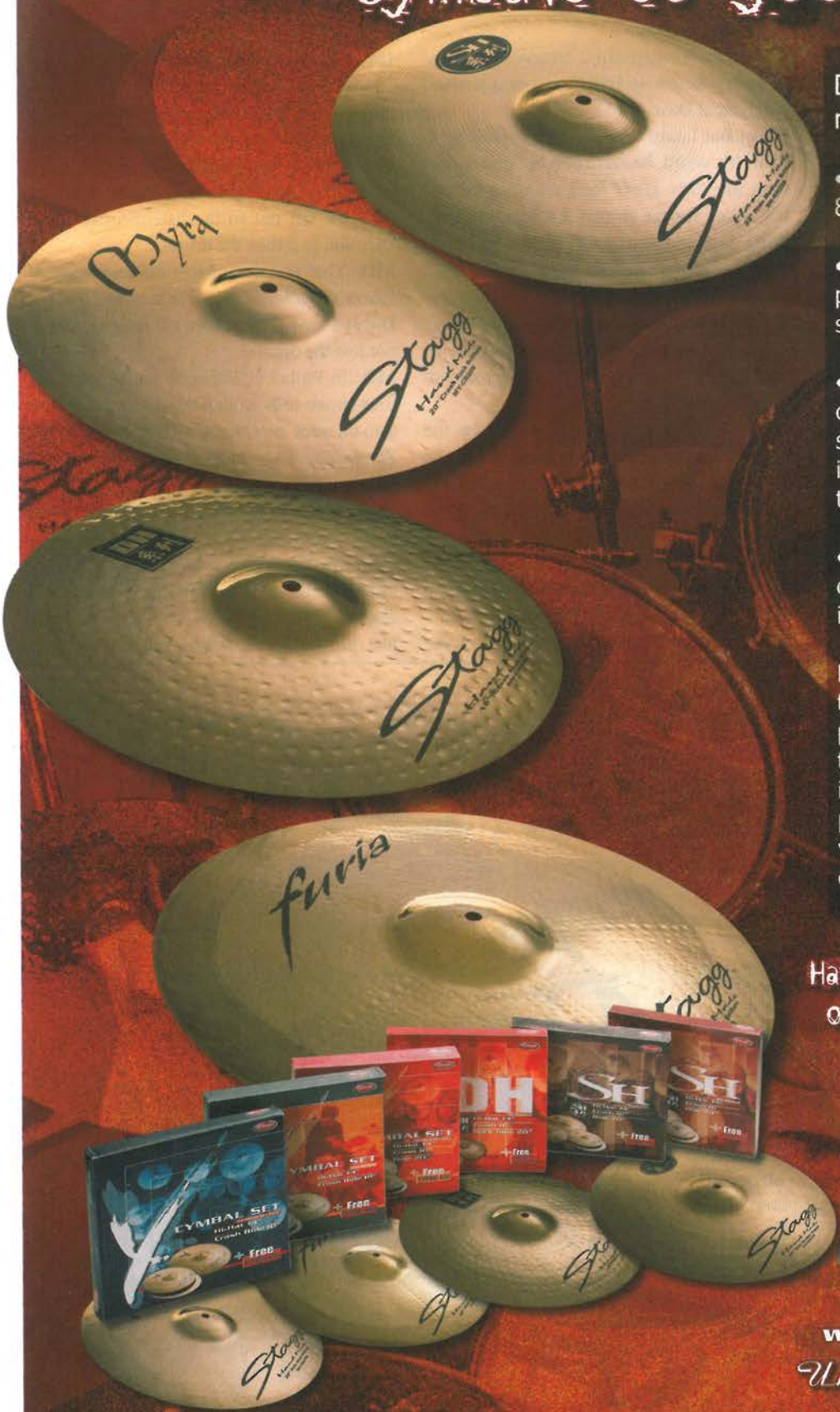

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have to make the drums sound like they're mixed, but do it all by yourself. Lay off the cymbals a little bit, let the kick drum come through, and let the drums ring out.

MD: Many rock drummers play without any sense of dynamics.

Dave: You have to play with dynamics in order to make it sound good. That's the beauty of what John Bonham would do. You could see that he wasn't destroying his drums all the time, but he had his moments. And when he did, they would jump out at you. It's all about picking those moments. In doing that you have to give yourself some room to go up and down.

MD: Have you always thought about dynamics?

Dave: Yes. I hate it when I see drummers beating the shit out of their drums. Then when it comes time to do the big roll before the chorus, the dynamic drops. You have to build it up, and that's where all that ride cymbal wash stuff comes from. For me, that comes from Rat Scabies of The Damned, and really building a dynamic in a room where there are thirty people and no PA, trying to build the energy that way.

MD: You play drums on some Foo Fighters records, but did returning to your thrash roots for Probot require practice?

Dave: Not really. It almost all seems the same to me. It's the basic hi-hat, ride, kick, and snare dynamic.

MD: That's surprising, because some of those tracks are technical and don't sound like typical Dave Grohl.

Dave: But I didn't have to get psyched up to do it. It's weird, because playing drums on a song like "My Hero" seems harder for me. It's easier for me to play hardcore—something fast and heavy—than the verses in something like "Smells Like Teen Spirit." To break down into some straight, tight hi-hat and no-frills verse is always challenging.

MD: Did you create the drum part in Probot's "Dictatosaurus" as a complement to the guitars?

Dave: When I write songs I almost see the guitar as a drumset. Like I said, I see the lower notes as the kick and toms and the higher notes as the snare and cymbals. So if I'm writing a riff, the lower note that is rolling underneath should be the kick or the toms. And the sharp accent stabs should be the snare. I see chords and higher notes on a guitar like the washing of a cymbal or the ringing of a bell. The lower notes are the groove or the beat. Riffs are basically just rhythmic patterns with a sense of musicality—melody in a rhythmic pattern.

MD: Sounds very organic.

Dave: Yeah, everything has to lock in. So if I've written a guitar part, I want to complement it with the drums. I don't want the drums to stand outside and above everything else. You can use the drums to propel a riff, not necessarily mirror it or mock it, but to push the riff out so the listeners pay more attention to it than the drums.

MD: That is an art. Most novices want to follow the soloist lick for lick.

Dave: I was always focused on everything, not just the drums.

MD: In Probot's "Silent Scream," you play four-stroke rolls around the toms, which you also do often on Queens Of The Stone Age's *Songs For The Deaf*. How do you make them work?

Dave: I just go by ear. If it seems it's going to fit within the riff or within the arrangement, they're a nice way to build a part or introduce the next part of the song. That's always what I try to do with rolls. I don't just throw them anywhere. You find a way to

introduce the next part to warn people that there's a change in the arrangement and to somehow do it in an interesting way.

MD: How do you keep that edge in your single-stroke rolls?

Dave: When I was young, I tried to focus on consistency between the hands. When doing a single-stroke roll, if you're going to make it powerful and you're going to blast through the snare, some fills sound best when there are no accents and both hands are consistent, sounding like a machine gun. Honestly, the reason I do single-stroke rolls and flams is because of my learning to play the drums on pillows, with no resistance. Then it's just a matter of creating rolls that are interesting.

And you don't need rolls in the whole song; you only need rolls to set up the next section. Doing so dramatically can make the next section seem twice as powerful. I like beginning rolls long before most drummers would, but it depends. It's all about the ears. Drummers should rely more on their ears than their calculators. Playing from the heart and soul is more important than playing for trophies and speed.

MD: Also on "Silent Scream," you play a pattern of alternating 8th notes on the bell, working in the 2 and 4 on the snare drum.

Dave: That's my homage to Dave Lombardo. Dave and Bill Stevenson [Black Flag, Descendants] had the quickest right hands I'd ever seen. Bill could play the drums heavier than anyone else without hitting them harder than anyone else.

MD: You play hard, but you're not a big guy.

Dave: I think it's because of the snap motion I use. But being a powerful drummer has nothing to do with anything physical. It's almost like that freaky phenomenon where somebody gets trapped under a car and some shrimpy guy like me lifts the car off of him. It's just adrenaline. I think it comes from your heart more than from your physicality.

MD: Drummers sometimes play with more passion when they're angry.

Dave: One of the things that always bummed me out about Nirvana is that people thought we played with such reckless abandon because of our angst and rage. But man, I was just having a blast. I loved it and thought it was great. All that power came from a celebration of the moment.

MD: Is it the same attitude with Queens and Probot?

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Dave: Yeah, man. Queens is the best band I've ever played with in my life. When you get that correct combination of elements and musicians, and everything comes into place, you're unstoppable.

MD: Is there something about the way Queens play guitar riffs that affects your drumming?

Dave: Josh Homme [Queens' vocalist/guitarist] is also a drummer. He writes riffs the same way I do. He can imagine the drums as being just as important as the guitar riff. He's very groove-oriented and very rhythmic.

MD: That groove in "No One Knows"…

Dave: …that's one of the great grooves of all time. It's funny, but when we recorded *Songs For The Deaf*, I was only going to play on three songs. So I did my three songs and split. I only knew three of their songs for that record. They had written and rehearsed the other songs with another drummer. Then Josh called and asked if I wanted to play on the whole thing. Well, I thought that would be great.

When we were rehearsing, they would play a guitar riff for me and then we would jam on it for half an hour. As it was starting to take shape, we would stop and move into the big room and start recording. We didn't use click tracks. We did it all live together in the room. We recorded the drums first and then overdubbed all the cymbals.

MD: You recorded the drum tracks first without cymbals?

Dave: I played the drums and used pads in place of the cymbals. I could hear the cymbal sounds in my headphones, but there was no live cymbal sound in the room. That way the engineer could isolate every microphone without the cymbals bleeding into the drum mix. That lets you control the sound much more than the usual way of recording drums. Is that ride cymbal washing out too much? Just bring it down. Want to compress that snare more and tweak it out? Just do it. You have nothing bleeding into any other mic'. That had a lot to do with the way I played those patterns.

I had to have all of my patterns with Queens worked out before I went to record the drums and do the cymbal overdubs. If I just played some random crap, it would have taken me forever to figure out the arrangements. And without reading music—which I don't—to memorize an entire arrangement full of random drum accents and hits would have been crazy. I had to have my patterns worked out so that when it came to overdubbing the cymbals, I could play the exact same thing.

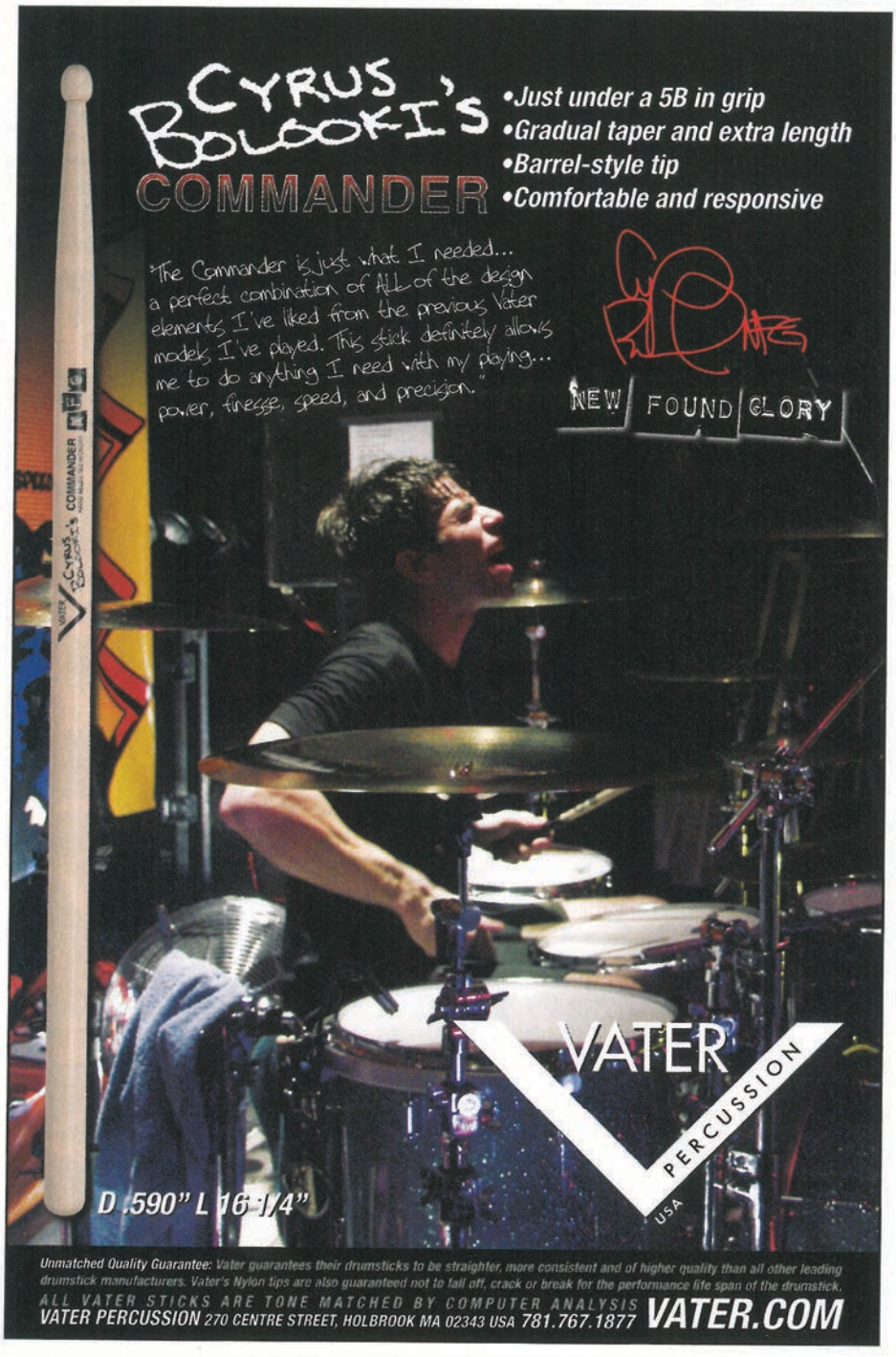
MD: Did you initially think, "This is going to be a monster headache"?

Dave: Yeah, but I ended up recording all of the cymbals for fourteen songs in one night.

MD: You do other things like that on *Songs For The Deaf*. You accent the backside of the beat sometimes, placing snare beats on the "&"s, like in "Go With The Flow," where you play a lot of flams. Can you give some advice for playing flams with clarity?

Dave: I'm a big fan of the flam. I would rather throw in a Tony Thompson flam fill than something off of *2112*. Anyway, flams aren't as simple as they seem. They really have to sync with the track. Your two hands have to be the correct distance apart. They have to fall on the snare at a precise distance from each other. And if you flam a drum and choke it, it doesn't work. Dale Crover from The Melvins is my favorite flammer of all time. His are like fireworks.

MD: You find all these spaces that you personalize, like the full-set triplets in "Song



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For The Dead." How do you play those triplets?

Dave: I start the triplet with my right hand on the snare—right, left, foot. I got that from listening to Bonham.

MD: Are you playing double kick now?

Dave: No, I can't do it. My left foot is retarded.

MD: So those are bass drum/floor tom combinations with Queens and Probot?

Dave: Yep. On "Red War," with Probot, I discovered a way to cheat it. I actually do it on the Queens record too, on the choruses of "First It Giveth." Your right hand crashes on beat 4, your left hand comes down on the snare on 2 and 4, and the space in between is filled up by the floor tom and the kick drum.

MD: So you're alternating between the floor and kick?

Dave: Right. A big enough floor tom can sound like a second kick. Then you kind of let it go. And in every other bar there are snare rolls and floor tom rolls in between. It sounds complicated but it really isn't.

MD: How did you come up with that?

Dave: I was always big on floor tom/kick drum combinations. And I've always been big on short cuts. Since I couldn't afford a double kick drum when I was coming up, I would find ways to do it with my floor tom. It's about finding short cuts and doing things that sound complicated but are really simple. Sometimes things that sound simple are complicated, but to me it's all about finding short cuts and doing so tastefully. It's fooling the drums and fooling the listener.

MD: Probot's "Emerald Law" sounds like double bass.

Dave: But it isn't. I've played around with double pedals, but I can't really get a handle on them. That's why I have so much admiration for Dave Lombardo, Vinnie Paul, and Joey Jordison of Slipknot. How do those guys do that stuff?

MD: Did playing with different musicians early on have an impact on your groove?

Dave: One of the best drum lessons I ever had was from the bass player of Scream, Skeeter Thompson. When I joined the band, I was out of control. I was fast and powerful, but I had no clue when to say no. It was all freakout all the time. Skeeter said, "Okay, we're going to go down in the basement, play this one riff for half an hour, and you're not going to do a single drum fill." I was like, "Whatever. This will be easy." Within three minutes I was losing my mind. I wanted to rip. It was torture, and so difficult. That was the best lesson I ever learned. From then on I thought, "What is the least I can do, rather than muddle the song with drumming?"

Songs aren't about the drums. Songs are about the *songs*. And what every drummer should know is that you have to play for the song. There are some drummers who are amazing in the spotlight and who should be recognized as a priority in the band. But honestly, with the kind of music I play, you have to play the drums for the sake of the song. If you can tag your signature at the end of that song with a few hooks and have a few moments that stand out, then you've done your job.

Another priority of mine is making people want to "air drum" along to my playing. I'm talking about people who don't know how to play the drums. It's always cool to see people air drumming to your music.

MD: I had never before seen a drummer

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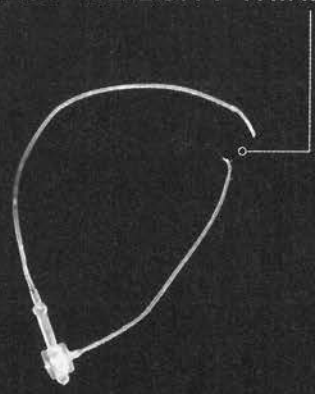

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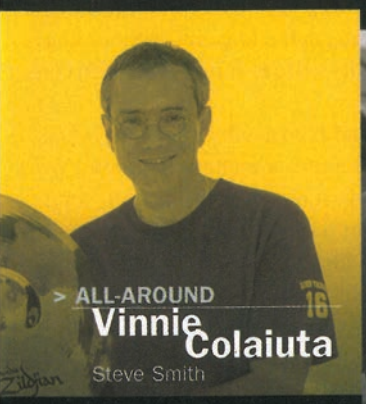

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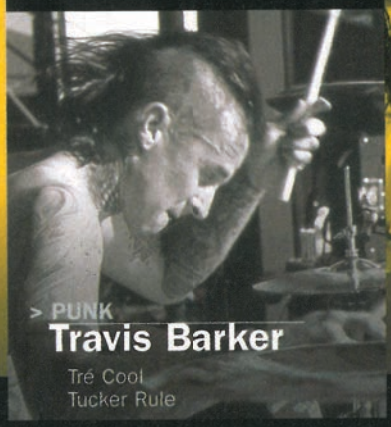

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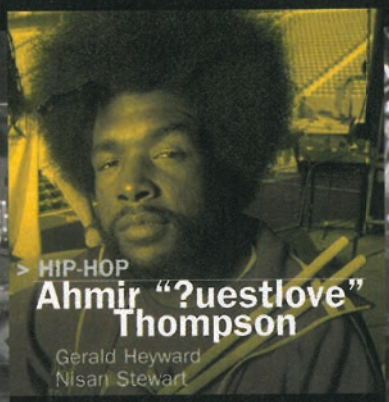

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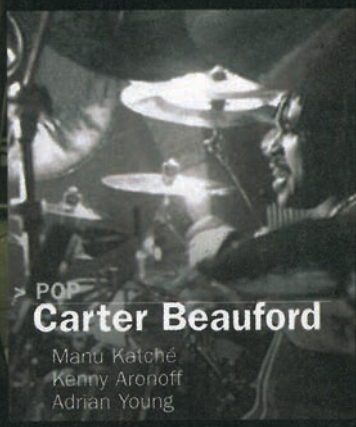

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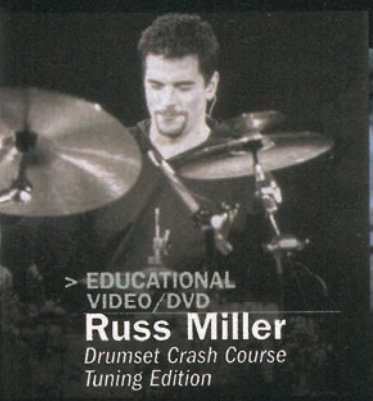

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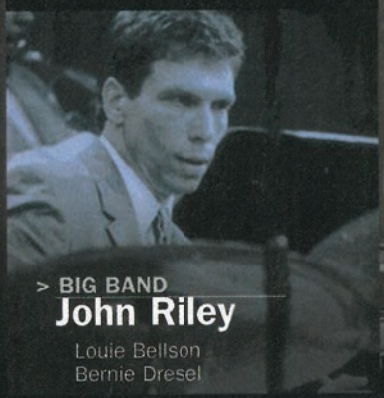

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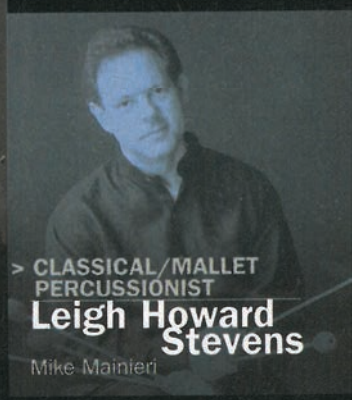

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Dave Grohl

play with the kind of full-on body pummel that you did in the "Smells Like Teen Spirit" video. Now that way of playing is commonplace.

Dave: Keith Moon rocked it out years ago. I can't imagine that I was the first guy to do it. There must be others.

MD: Every drummer in every nü metal band does it now. Also, many of the hardcore bands were fast and heavy, but I don't hear a lot of soul in their playing.

Dave: The Bad Brains had a lot of groove. And No Means No, the British Columbia band, had an amazing drummer, John Wright. He was the Stewart Copeland of the hardcore scene. Also, growing up outside D.C., we had the go-go scene there. People think it's stripper's music, but go-go is underground funk with a specific groove, and it's totally percussive. It usually features drums, congas, RotoToms, shakers, bass, keyboards, and a horn section. It hasn't changed in twenty years. But I listened to that music too. And my band would play at the punk/funk shows where hardcore bands would play with go-go bands. It was really like an inner-city black thing in D.C., bands like Trouble Funk and Chuck Brown & The Soul Searchers.

I like listening to disco, too. Tony Thompson, God rest his soul, was one of my favorite drummers. He was a hero. I like dance music; I like that groove. But drummers overlook it because it doesn't sound like Phil Collins or Neil Peart.

MD: There are no individual song credits on the last two Foo Fighters albums, so how can someone tell whether it's you or Taylor Hawkins?

Dave: It is tough. Well, Taylor was raised on Stewart Copeland; he's his hero. Taylor is a phenomenal drummer. I tell people that it's a shame that he has to be in this band because he's capable of doing so much more than he does with us. He's one of the best rock drummers around.

Taylor and I emulate each other's styles, so if you hear a track that sounds like Copeland, it might be me, because I'm just trying to play like Taylor. If he's playing, he wants it to sound like me. But from now on he'll be doing all of the drumming on Foo Fighters records.

MD: Some of your drumming is so visceral, almost architectural at times, the way you insert your identity into a song and frame it. "Smells Like Teen Spirit" would not have been such a huge hit without your giant flam/bass drum intro. How did you create that?

Dave: We had rehearsed for months in this little barn behind somebody's house. We were writing song after song after song. When we got to that song, I don't know, it just seemed like it needed to kick in somehow. [laughs]

MD: How is your body holding up?

Dave: Great. I have no problems.

MD: How about your ears?

Dave: They're a little worse. [laughs] They've been in front of some big monitors for fifteen years. I used to wear earplugs in Nirvana when my monitor got to the size of a small club PA. But it didn't last.

MD: Do you practice the drums now?

Dave: Sometimes, and there's so much more I would love to learn. I'm not even halfway there. I feel like I could be such a better drummer, but I'm not a drummer in a band at the moment. [laughs]

MD: But you always return to the drums.

Dave: Always. It's the one instrument that I feel confident and comfortable playing. Everything else is a challenge, which is why I *do* everything else.

When I started Foo Fighters, it wasn't because I thought I would be the greatest guitar player, singer, or songwriter in the world. It was because I'd never done it before. And I was scared.

MD: You had made a lot of home tapes before Nirvana.

Dave: There were certain people who I would let hear my voice or my music. I was just scared and embarrassed. That's why I started Foo Fighters. I had nothing left to lose. Nirvana was finished, and, what was I gonna do?

MD: This year marks the tenth anniversary of Kurt Cobain's passing. Did he like your songs?

Dave: Nirvana used to jam on a couple of them—"Alone An Easy Target" and "Exhausted"—both of which turned up on the first Foo Fighters album. It was weird. Kurt liked the music to "Exhausted," but he was afraid to ask me to change the lyrics. With "Alone," we jammed on it a lot, but it never took shape. He liked the chorus but not the verse. I think he didn't want to insult me by saying, "That part is good but that part isn't." Kurt was a really gentle and polite person.

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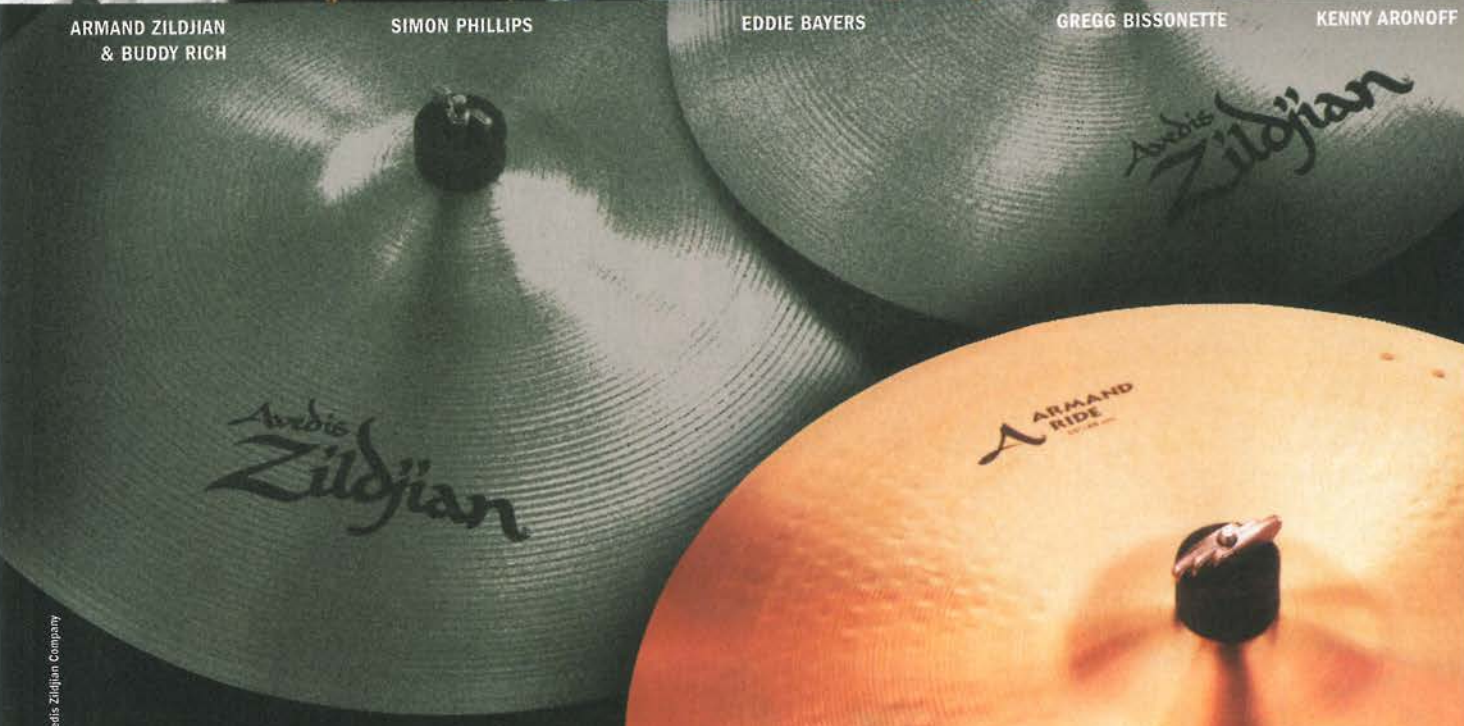
SIMON PHILLIPS

EDDIE BAYERS

GREGG BISSONETTE

KENNY ARONOFF



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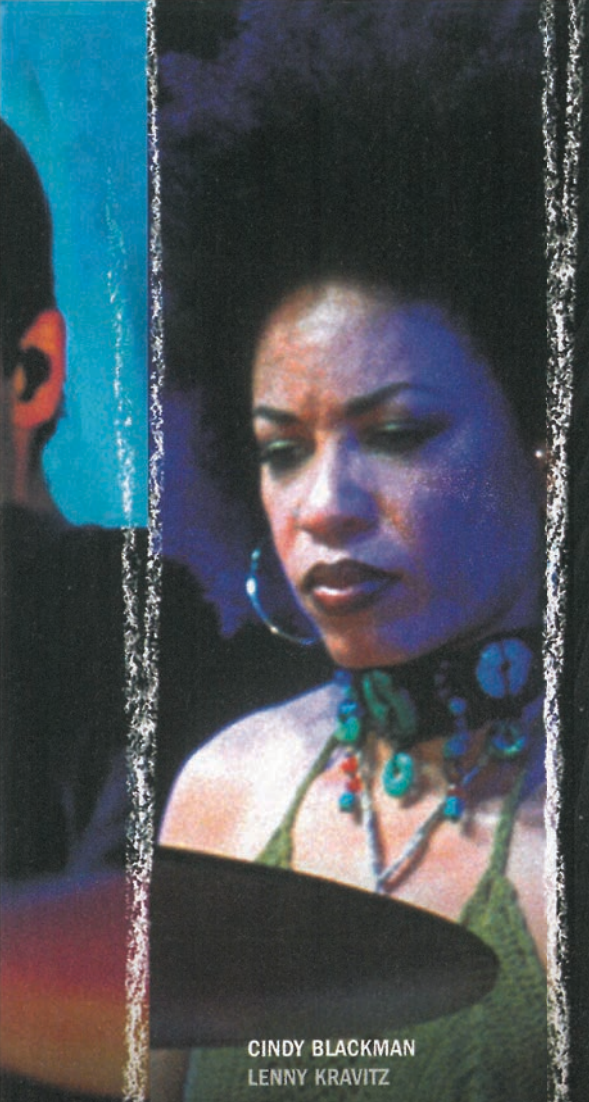

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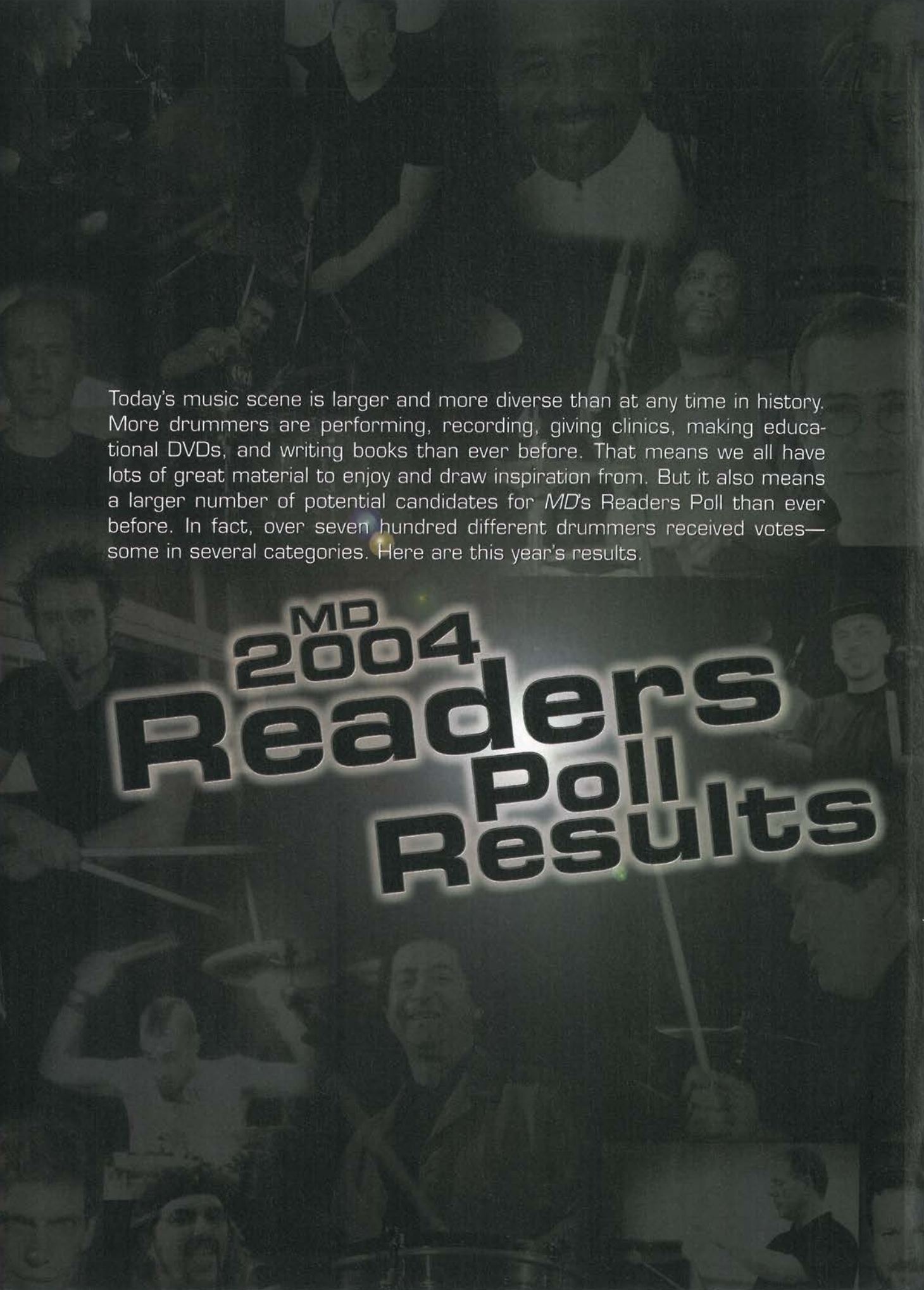


Today's music scene is larger and more diverse than at any time in history. More drummers are performing, recording, giving clinics, making educational DVDs, and writing books than ever before. That means we all have lots of great material to enjoy and draw inspiration from. But it also means a larger number of potential candidates for *MD*'s Readers Poll than ever before. In fact, over seven hundred different drummers received votes—some in several categories. Here are this year's results.

MD 2004 Readers Poll Results

HALL OF FAME

2004: MIKE PORTNOY

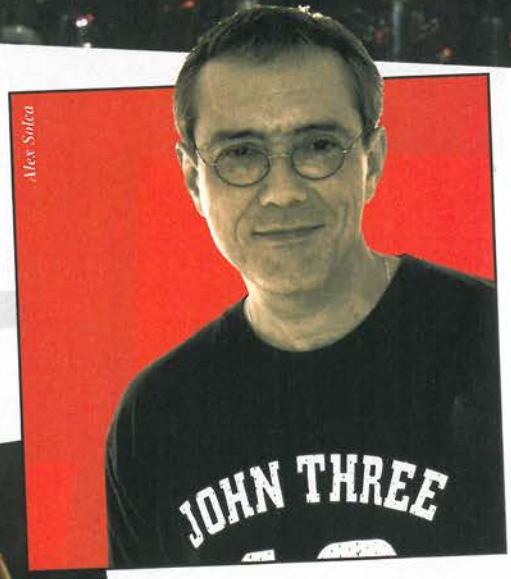
2003: Simon Phillips
2002: Steve Smith
2001: Dennis Chambers
2000: Dave Weckl
1999: Roy Haynes
1998: Ringo Starr
1997: Terry Bozzio
1996: Vinnie Colaiuta
1995: Elvin Jones
1994: Larrie Londin
1993: Jeff Porcaro
1992: Max Roach
1991: Art Blakey
1990: Bill Bruford
1989: Carl Palmer
1988: Joe Morello
1987: Billy Cobham
1986: Tony Williams
1985: Louie Bellson
1984: Steve Gadd
1983: Neil Peart
1982: Keith Moon
1981: John Bonham
1980: Buddy Rich
1979: Gene Krupa

Alex Solca

ALL-AROUND

VINNIE COLAIUTA

2. Steve Smith
3. Mike Portnoy
4. Josh Freese
5. Virgil Donati

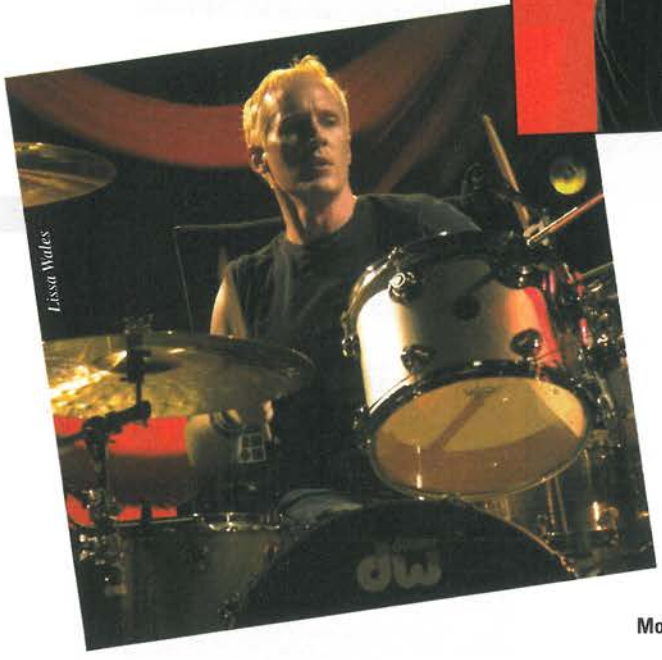


Alex Solca

STUDIO

JOSH FREESE

2. Vinnie Colaiuta
3. Kenny Aronoff
4. Steve Gadd
5. Abe Laboriel Jr.


Lissa Wales

MAINSTREAM JAZZ

JEFF HAMILTON

2. Peter Erskine
3. Elvin Jones
4. Jack DeJohnette
5. Matt Wilson

CONTEMPORARY JAZZ

DAVE WECKL

2. Steve Smith
3. Dennis Chambers
4. Bill Bruford
5. Vinnie Colaiuta

BIG BAND

JOHN RILEY

2. Ed Shaughnessy
3. Louie Bellson
4. Jeff Hamilton
5. Bernie Dresel

UP & COMING

JASON BITTNER

(SHADOWS FALL)

2. Jon Theodore (The Mars Volta)
3. Teddy Campbell (Gospel, Kelly Clarkson)
4. Keith Carlock (Sting, Steely Dan)
5. Alicia Warrington (Kelly Osbourne)

POP

CARTER BEAUFORD

2. Manu Katché
3. Kenny Aronoff
4. Adrian Young
5. Abe Laboriel Jr.

ROCK

NEIL PEART

2. Jimmy Chamberlin
3. Danny Carey
4. Josh Freese
5. Carter Beauford

THANK YOU
MODERN DRUMMER READERS!

HALL OF FAME
Mike Portnoy

ALL-AROUND
Mike Portnoy
Virgil Donati

MAINSTREAM JAZZ
Jack DeJohnette

CONTEMPORARY JAZZ
#1 Dave Weckl

BIG BAND
Ed Shaughnessy

UP & COMING
Alicia Warrington

ROCK
#1 Neil Peart

METAL
Vinnie Paul
Tomas Haake

PROGRESSIVE
#1 Mike Portnoy
Virgil Donati
Neil Peart

R&B
#1 Zoro
John Blackwell
David Garibaldi

HIP-HOP
John Roberts

HAND PERCUSSIONIST
#1 Richie "Gajate" Garcia

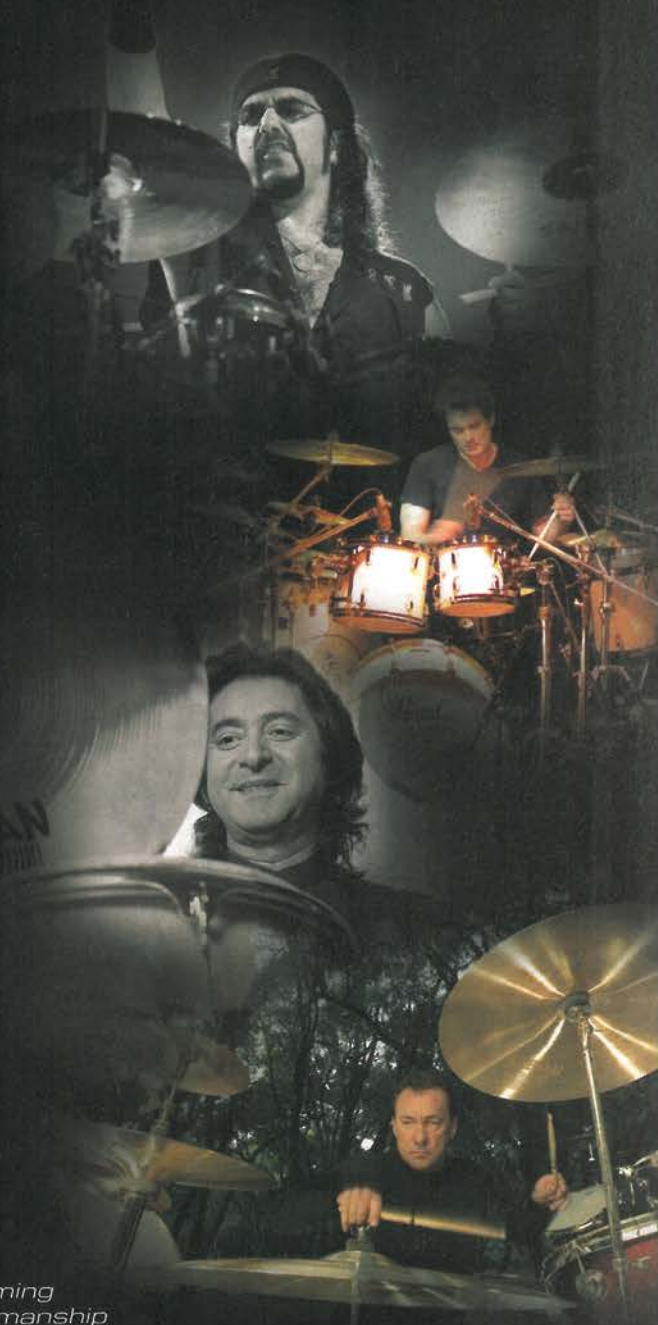
CLASSICAL/MALLET PERCUSSIONIST
Vic Firth
Evelyn Glennie

CLINICIAN
#1 Virgil Donati
Dom Famularo
Terry Bozzio

EDUCATIONAL BOOK
#1 Mark Atkinson: *The Unreel Drum Book*
Fred Dinkins: *It's About Time*
Joe Bergamini: *MD Classic Tracks*

EDUCATIONAL VIDEO
Mike Portnoy: *Ten Degrees Of Turbulent Drumming*
John Blackwell: *Technique, Grooving, And Showmanship*

RECORDED PERFORMANCE
Mike Portnoy > Dream Theater: *Train Of Thought*
Neil Peart > Rush: *Rush In Rio (DVD)*



SABIAN

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METAL

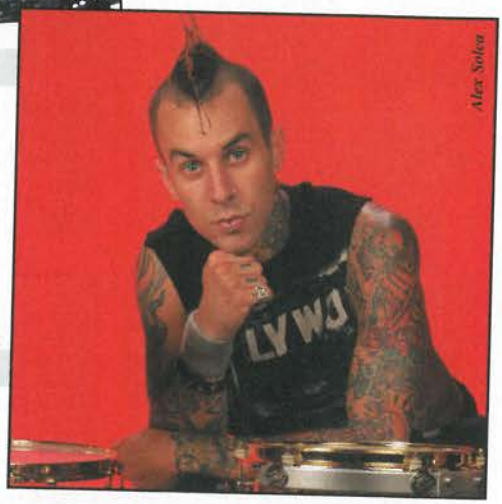
MORGAN ROSE

2. Lars Ulrich
3. Joey Jordison
4. Vinnie Paul
5. Tomas Haake

PUNK

TRAVIS BARKER

2. Josh Freese
3. Tré Cool
4. Adam Carson
5. Tucker Rule



PROG

MIKE PORTNOY

2. Virgil Donati
3. Neil Peart
4. Danny Carey
5. Jon Theodore

R&B

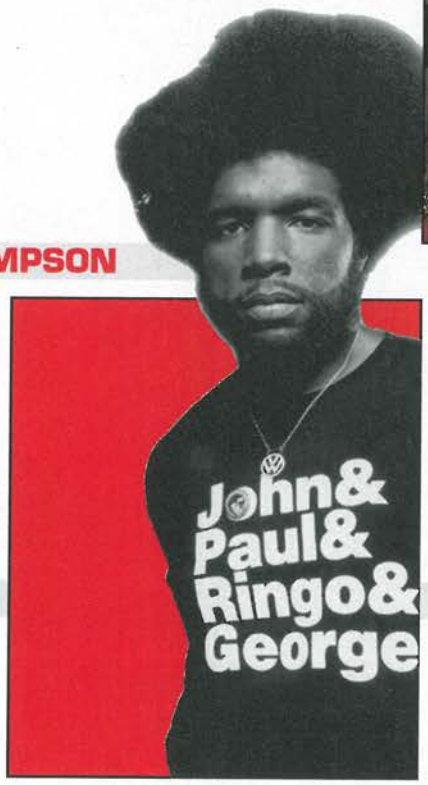
ZORO

2. John Blackwell
3. David Garibaldi
4. Ahmir "?uestlove" Thompson
5. Stanton Moore

HIP-HOP

AHMIR "?UESTLOVE" THOMPSON

2. Gerald Heyward
3. Nisan Stewart
4. Pharell Williams
5. Li'l John Roberts



COUNTRY

PAUL LEIM

2. Eddie Bayers
3. J.D. Blair
4. Trey Gray
5. Chad Cromwell

MIKE PORTNOY
DREAM THEATER

EVELYN GLENNIE
SOLO ARTIST

TEDDY CAMPBELL
BRITNEY SPEARS

JASON BITTNER
SHADOWS FALL

THE READERS HAVE CHOSEN. THE CHOSEN HAVE CHOSEN.

Congratulations to the winners of the Modern Drummer Readers' Poll.

ELVIN JONES
JAZZ MACHINE

ED SHAUGHNESSY
DOC SEVERINSEN

CARTER BEAUFORD
DAVE MATTHEWS BAND

NEIL PEART
RUSH

TUCKER RULE
THURSDAY

CHAD CROMWELL
MARK KNOPFLER

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HAND PERCUSSIONIST

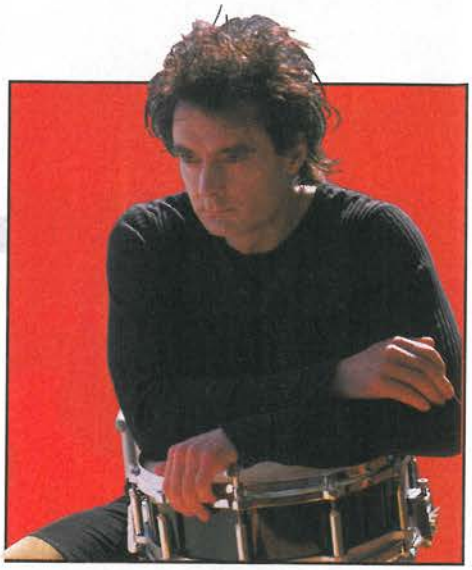
RICHIE "GAJATE" GARCIA

2. Giovanni Hidalgo
3. Luis Conte
4. Alex Acuña
5. Airto

CLASSICAL/MALLET PERCUSSIONIST

LEIGH HOWARD STEVENS

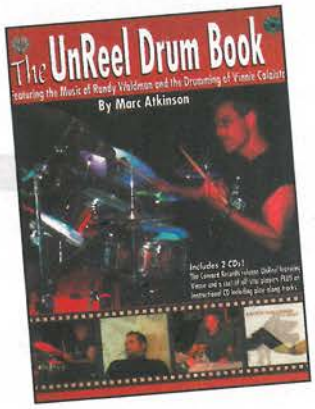
2. Vic Firth
3. Evelyn Glennie
4. Gary Burton
5. Mike Mainieri



CLINICIAN

VIRGIL DONATI

2. Dom Famularo
3. Thomas Lang
4. Steve Smith
5. Terry Bozzio

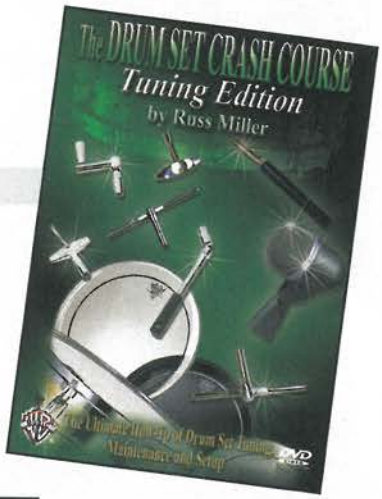


EDUCATIONAL BOOK

MARK ATKINSON:

THE UNREEL DRUM BOOK

2. Rob Leytham: *Ostinatos For The Melodic Drumset*
3. Billy Ward: *Inside Out*
4. Fred Dinkins: *It's About Time*
5. Joe Bergamini: *MD Classic Tracks*



EDUCATIONAL VIDEO/DVD

RUSS MILLER:

***DRUMSET CRASH COURSE TUNING EDITION* (video/DVD)**

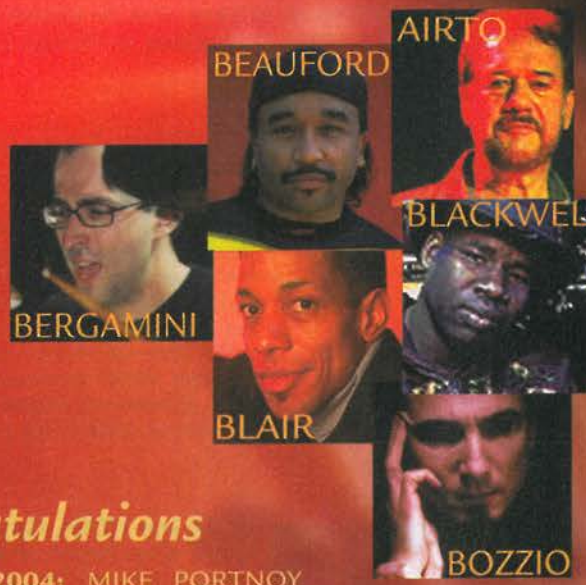
2. Thomas Lang: *Creative Control*
3. Mike Portnoy: *Ten Degrees Of Turbulent Drumming*
4. Marco Minnemann: *Extreme Drumming*
5. John Blackwell: *Technique, Grooving, And Showmanship*

RECORDED PERFORMANCE

MORGAN ROSE—

SEVENDUST: *SEASONS*

2. Mike Portnoy—Dream Theater: *Train Of Thought*
3. Neil Peart—Rush: *Rush In Rio* (DVD)
4. Manu Katché, Archie Peña, and Jose "Pepe" Velazquez—Gloria Estefan: *Unwrapped*
5. Jon Theodore—The Mars Volta: *De-Loused In The Comatorium*



Congratulations

HALL OF FAME 2004: MIKE PORTNOY
ALL-AROUND: VINNIE COLAIUTA, MIKE PORTNOY
STUDIO: VINNIE COLAIUTA, STEVE GADD
MAINSTREAM JAZZ: PETER ERSKINE, JACK DEJOHNETTE
CONTEMPORARY JAZZ: DAVE WECKL, DENNIS CHAMBERS, VINNIE COLAIUTA **POP:** CARTER BEAUFORD **ROCK:** JIMMY CHAMBERLIN, CARTER BEAUFORD **HAND PERCUSSIONIST:** RICHIE GAJATE GARCIA, GIOVANNI HIDALGO, AIRTO **PROG:** MIKE PORTNOY **COUNTRY:** J.D. BLAIR **R&B:** ZORO, JOHN BLACKWELL, DAVID GARIBALDI, STANTON MOORE **CLASSICAL/MALLET PERCUSSIONIST:** EVELYN GLENNIE **EDUCATIONAL BOOK:** JOE BERGAMINI: MD CLASSIC TRACKS **EDUCATIONAL VIDEO/DVD:** MIKE PORTNOY: TEN DEGREES OF TURBULENT DRUMMING, JOHN BLACKWELL: TECHNIQUE, GROOVING, AND SHOWMANSHIP **CLINICIAN:** DOM FAMULARO, TERRY BOZZIO **RECORDED PERFORMANCE:** MIKE PORTNOY - DREAM THEATER: TRAIN OF THOUGHT

LP is proud to count these MD reader's poll winners among their incredible family of artists.

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Editors Achievement Award

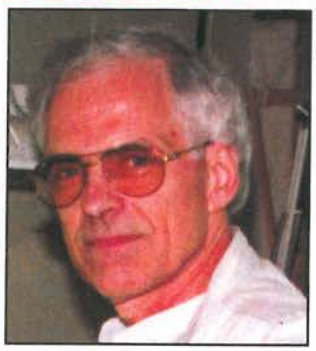
This award is given by the editors of *Modern Drummer* in recognition of outstanding contribution to the drum/percussion community by a performer, author, educator, manufacturer, etc. The persons so honored may be notable figures in drumming history or active participants on today's scene. The criteria for this award is the value of the contribution(s) made by the honorees, in terms of influence on subsequent musical styles, educational methods, or products. There will be no limit as to the number of honorees that may be designated each year. For 2004, *MD*'s editors are pleased to honor:

JIMMY COBB

Jimmy Cobb's drumming on the legendary 1959 Miles Davis album *Kind Of Blue* is enough to secure his position in the pantheon of drumming greats. (Being on the best-selling jazz album of all time is a pretty large feather in one's cap, after all.) Jimmy's inherent sense of swing and uncanny finesse underscore that seminal session.

But Jimmy's career has progressed steadily ever since that classic record date. Over the ensuing years, he has performed or recorded with Wynton Kelly, Wes Montgomery, Sarah Vaughan, Hank Jones, Nancy Wilson, Nat Adderley, and a host of other jazz luminaries. In 1998 Jimmy emerged as the leader of his own band, dubbed Cobb's Mob. Their debut recording, *Only For The Pure At Heart*, was all about old-school swing. This year saw the release of *Cobb's Groove*, which showcases mellow but propulsive bop supported by the seventy-five-year-old drummer's elegant phrasing and airy timekeeping. Forty-five years after *Kind Of Blue*, Jimmy Cobb is still going strong.

GARY GAUGER

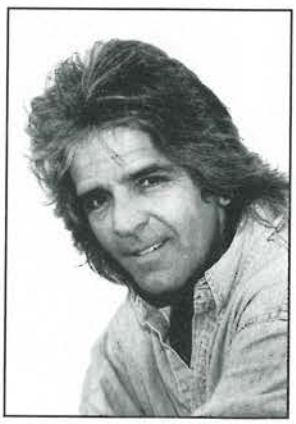


In the late 1970s, Gary Gauger was a working drummer who wondered why his tom-toms sounded great when struck *off* the kit, but had significantly reduced resonance when mounted *on* the kit. A natural tinkerer, Gary started experimenting with ways to support his toms without attaching them to any rigid hardware. Eventually, he created a system that involved semi-circular metal brackets that featured rubber-grommeted slots. Several of the tension rods on each tom passed loosely through these grommeted slots, suspending the drums without their being "locked" to any hardware. Thus was born the RIMS (Resonance Isolation Mounting System) concept.

Gary's invention opened drummers' eyes (and ears) to what drums could really sound like if their resonance wasn't tapped off by attached mounting hardware. The idea literally revolutionized the drum industry. Today, virtually every drum manufacturer offers drums on RIMS mounts or on their own form of suspension mounting.

But the RIMS system isn't Gary's only accomplishment. He's as dedicated to hardware innovation today as he ever was. Lately, he's been working with Mapex, helping them develop their new Janus Ergo tiltable hi-hat. Who knows what's next?

EDDIE TUDURI



From the 1970s to the late '90s, Eddie Tuduri toured and recorded with such artists as Dobie Gray, The Beach Boys, Rick Nelson, Del Shannon, Dwight Yoakam, Freddy Fender, Charlie Rich, Johnny Rivers, and Jim Messina. But on September 6, 1997 his life was forever changed when his neck was broken in a bodysurfing accident.

After surgery and hospitalization, Eddie was sent to the Rehabilitation Institute at Santa Barbara, California. He immediately began trying to grip a pair of sticks and hit a practice pad. He coerced neighboring patients and medical staff to join in, and his first drum circle was born. Recognizing the healing value of percussion, Eddie founded The Rehab Rhythm Rockers, a program dedicated to rhythm therapy. He enlisted the help of musical-instrument manufacturers in order to furnish patients with drums, shakers, maracas, congas, bongos, tambourines, cowbells, and percussion eggs so that they could join in the music-making.

The Rehab Rhythm Rockers program proved so successful that Eddie expanded the concept into a wider community, founding The Rhyhmic Arts Project (TRAP). Since that time, TRAP has combined the expertise of therapists and health care professionals with the musical participation of noted drummers and percussionists, including Vinnie Colaiuta, Airto, Joe Porcaro, Kalani, and Mike Shapiro.

The techniques developed by TRAP have been used to promote healing in various health care settings, including rehabilitation institutes, hospitals, support groups for people with Alzheimer's disease and traumatic brain injury, and programs for children and adults with cerebral palsy and other developmental disabilities. Eddie has augmented this effort by founding Gifted Artists Records, a label dedicated to providing an opportunity for people with developmental and other disabilities to record professional CDs.

TRAP's invitation to potential participants is "Do Something Extraordinary...." Eddie Tuduri already has.

READERS POLL SUBSCRIPTION GIVEAWAY

In appreciation for the participation of *MD*'s readership in this year's poll, three ballots were drawn at random to determine the winners of a free one-year subscription to *MD*. Those winners are Brien Andrysick of Princeton, Massachusetts, Jordan Mathis of Jacksonville, Florida, and Freddie Joseph Williams of Brooklyn, New York. Congratulations from *Modern Drummer*!

Remo congratulates our Modern Drummer 2004 Readers' Poll Winners.

2004 MODERN DRUMMER READERS POLL RESULTS

Hall of Fame:
MIKE PORTNOY

All-Around:
1. VINNIE COLAIUTA
2. Steve Smith
3. Mike Portnoy
4. Josh Freese
5. Virgil Donati

Studio:
1. JOSH FREESE
2. Vinnie Colaiuta
3. Kenny Arnonoff
4. Steve Gadd
5. Abe Laboriel, Jr.

Mainstream Jazz:
1. JEFF HAMILTON
5. Matt Wilson

Contemporary Jazz:
1. DAVE WECKL
2. Steve Smith
5. Vinnie Colaiuta

Big Band:
1. JOHN RILEY
3. Louie Bellson
4. Jeff Hamilton
5. Bernie Dresel

Up & Coming:
3. Teddy Campbell
4. Keith Carlock

Pop:
2. Manu Katché
3. Kenny Aronoff
4. Adrian Young
5. Abe Laboriel, Jr.

Rock:
1. NEIL PEART
2. Jimmy Chamberlin
4. Josh Freese

Metal:
2. Lars Ulrich
3. Joey Jordison
4. Vinnie Paul

Punk:
1. TRAVIS BARKER
2. Josh Freese
3. Tré Cool
4. Adam Carson

Progressive:
1. MIKE PORTNOY
2. Virgil Donati
3. Neil Peart

R&B:
2. John Blackwell, Jr.
3. David Garibaldi
4. Ahmir "?uestlove" Thompson
5. Stanton Moore

Hip-Hop:
1. AHMIR "?UESTLOVE" THOMPSON
2. Gerald Heyward
3. Nisan Stewart
5. Lil' John Roberts

Country:
1. PAUL LEIM
2. Eddie Bayers
4. Trey Gray
5. Chad Cromwell

Hand Percussionist:
1. RICHIE "GAJATE" GARCIA
3. Luis Conte

Classical/Mallet Percussionist
2. Vic Firth

Clinician:
1. VIRGIL DONATI
2. Dom Famularo
3. Thomas Lang
4. Steve Smith

Educational Book:
4. Fred Dinkins - It's About Time

Educational Video/DVD:
1. RUSS MILLER – DRUMSET CRASH COURSE TUNING EDITION
2. Thomas Lang – Creative Control
3. Mike Portnoy – Ten Degrees of Turbulent Drumming
5. John Blackwell, Jr. – Technique, Grooving, and Showmanship

Recorded Performance:
2. Mike Portnoy (Dream Theater – Train of Thought)
3. Neil Peart (Rush – Rush in Rio) (DVD)
4. Manu Katché, Archie Peña, (Gloria Estefan – Unwrapped)

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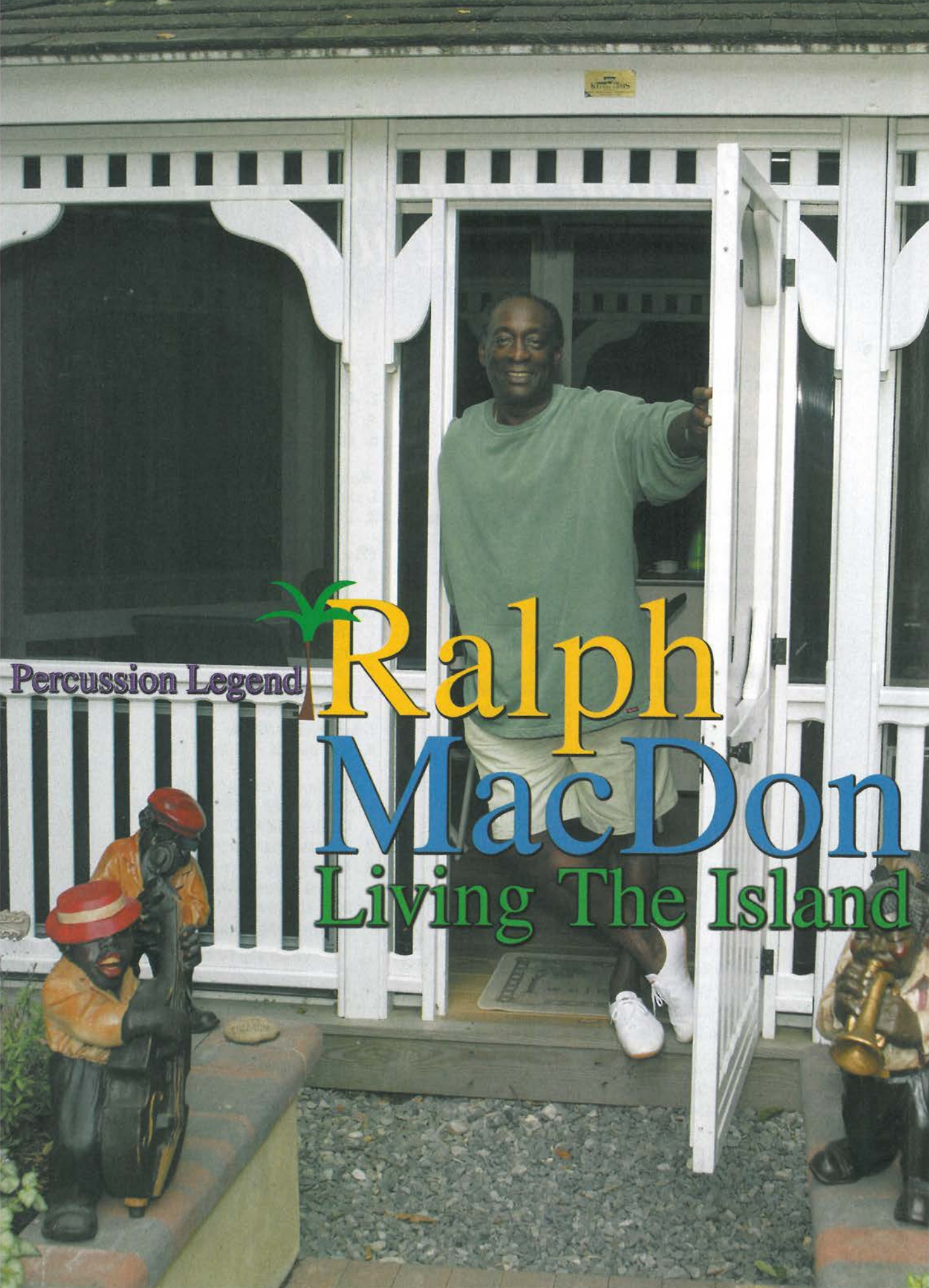

Percussion Legend
Ralph
MacDon
Living The Island

old Life

Story by Billy Amendola

Photos by Al Sayegh

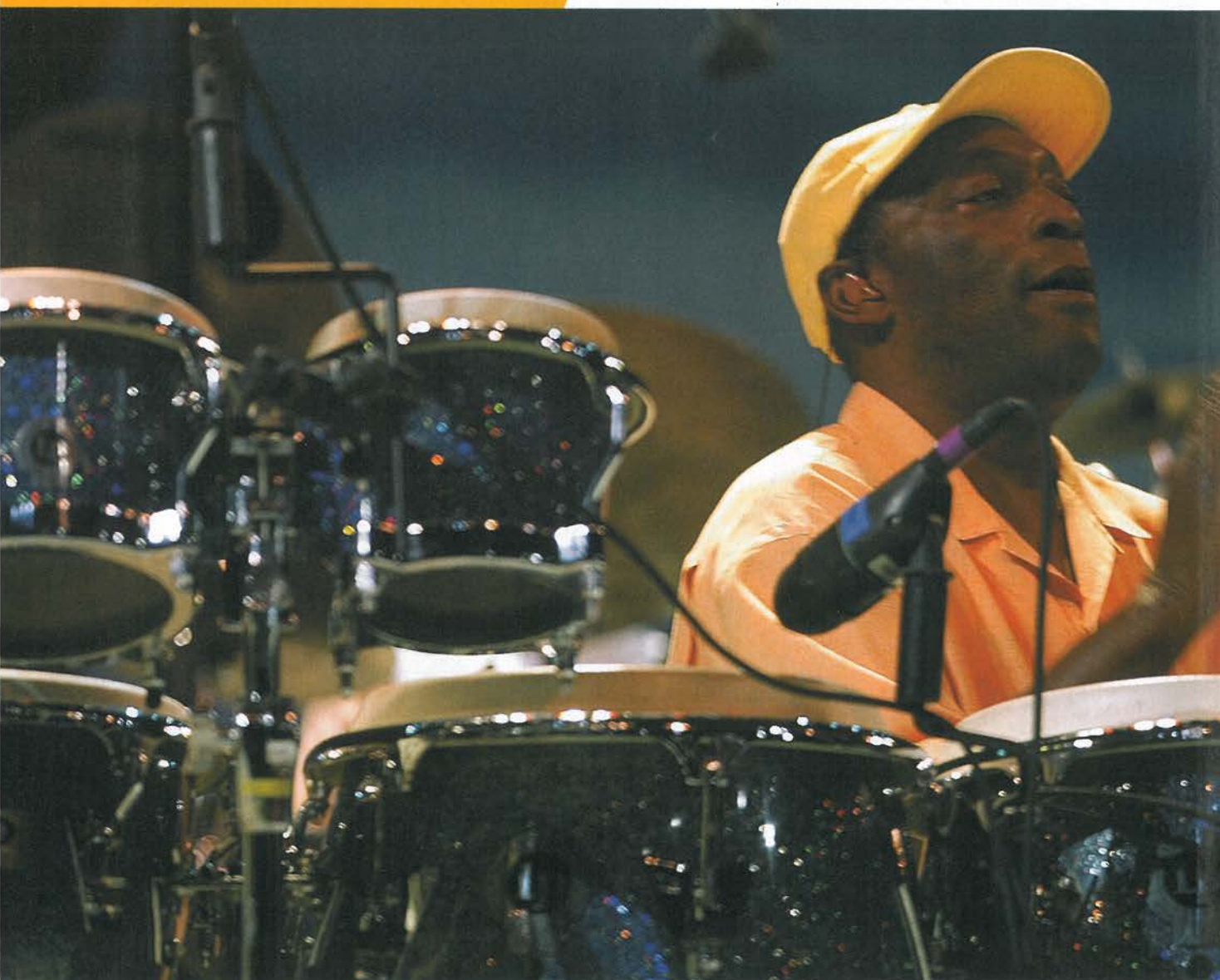
The lyrics from one of Ralph MacDonald's songs on his latest CD, *Home Grown,* start and end with words that sum up his life: "There is no better life than the island life. I love the island life, it makes my body free, it keeps my head together." Understandable words, from a man who worked hard all of his life to get to a place that is peaceful, laid-back, and very rewarding.

A first-call session percussionist since the-mid '60s, Ralph has performed on countless recordings with just about everyone in the business. A partial list includes Harry Belafonte, George Benson, David Bowie, Diana Ross, Tom Scott, Bob James, Quincy Jones, Billy Joel, Herbie Mann, Bette Midler, David Sanborn, Carly Simon, James Taylor, Phoebe Snow, Grover Washington Jr., and Steely Dan.

In 1980, MacDonald, along with his partners Bill Salter and Bill Eaton, penned the number-1 hit "Just The Two Of Us" for Grover Washington Jr. and Bill Withers. (The tune was recently redone by actor/rapper Will Smith.) Ralph and his partners are also the songwriters for the 1971 Roberta Flack/Donny Hathaway classic "Where Is The Love," which became a number-1 international hit, sold over ten million copies, and won several Grammy awards.

Besides album dates as a percussionist, Ralph has lent his groove to hundreds of jingles and movie soundtracks, as well as many 12" disco classics that we're *still* dancing to. Speaking of disco, Ralph's publishing company, Antisia Music, placed the song "Calypso Breakdown" on the *Saturday Night Fever* soundtrack. That record went on to sell forty-seven million copies and earn MacDonald two Grammys of his own. Not bad for a percussionist who really just wanted to follow in his dad's footsteps. "In my wildest dreams," Ralph says today, "if I thought I would be half as popular as my dad, I would have been very satisfied. My dad was regional—Harlem, Brooklyn, and Queens. In the New York area, he was very popular. But I never thought that I'd be international."

These days MacDonald still spends his time writing and recording—when he's not out on the road touring with Jimmy Buffett, who he's been with since the mid-'80s. "Jimmy first called me to write some songs



together," Ralph recalls, "and we finally got together and wrote 'Creola' for his *Floridays* album. Then we did a song called 'King Of Somewhere Hot' and a ballad called 'Pre-You.' Those two songs are on his album *Hot Water*. So I had some success with him as a songwriter. And then, around 1988, he said, 'Come join the band.' Around that time, I was working with artists in the R&B and jazz scene—guys like George Benson, Bob James, and Quincy Jones. I didn't think I'd have fun playing Jimmy Buffett–type music. Well, Jimmy said, 'Come out and try it for two weeks.' I've been there ever since."

Over his long and incredibly successful career, Ralph has also released numerous solo records. His latest, *Home Grown*, features top-shelf talent like Will Lee, Jeff Mirnov, and Tom Scott. And on drums is longtime rhythm-mate Chris Parker. (See the sidebar with Parker on page 75.) *Home Grown* is yet another highlight in Ralph MacDonald's stellar career.

MD: So your dad was a musician?

Ralph: Yes. He had a twelve-piece orchestra and played a lot of calypso and Latin music. He was always playing in bands opposite Tito Puente, Tito Rodriguez, and Arsenio Rodriguez. So I grew up with these people.

My dad's father was from Nigeria, so he knew the African shango stuff, which I learned from him. I'd hear the records that my dad and uncle played. My dad was into the African rhythm, and of course, being born in the Caribbean, he fused the African and Caribbean together. Uncle Boug, my dad's youngest brother, really taught me how to play the conga drums. He played for a lot of dance classes, and when I was a kid I used to play classes with him. That's where I learned most of my rhythms.

MD: How old were you at the time?

Ralph: About fourteen. Growing up in Harlem, I was heavily involved in a youth center, The Harlem Boys Club. I started playing steel drums there when I was fourteen years old. There was a man from Trinidad by the name of Dr. Conrad Mojay who started the steel band, and I joined. Also around this time, some friends of mine were auditioning for Harry Belafonte. I helped them carry the steel drums down, and they got the gig.

MD: Were you familiar with Harry? Did you know he was a star?

Ralph: Oh yeah, I knew he was big-time. I didn't particularly care for him in those days, though, because people from the Caribbean didn't feel Harry Belafonte was an authentic calypso singer. He was really a pop singer. He sang that sort of music and people accepted it. But the songs were beautiful, like "Jamaica Farewell" and "Island In The Sun."

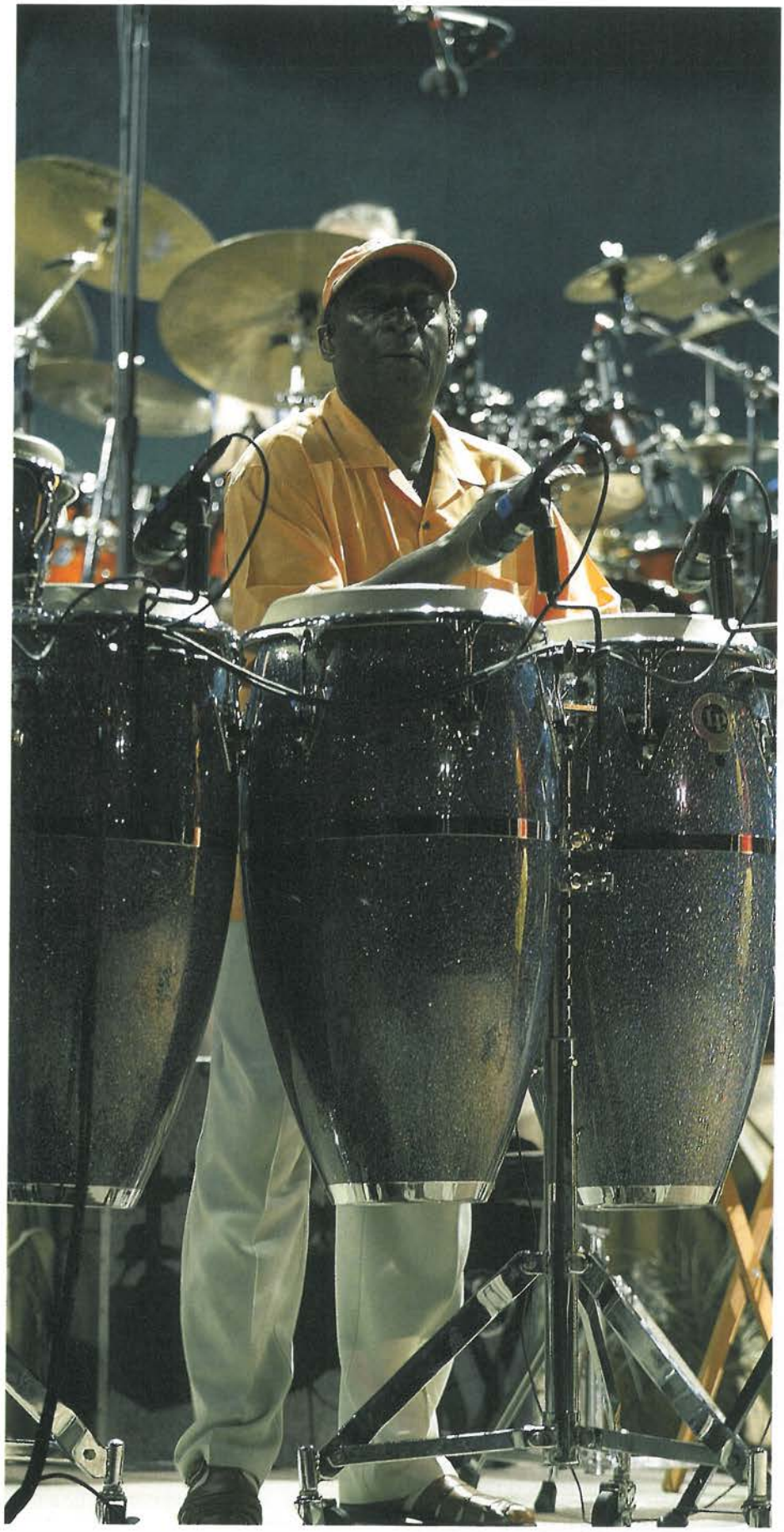
So I was sitting there one day, and one of the steel band guys was late for rehearsal. Harry was angry that the guy was late. So he looked at me and said, "Hey kid, can you play?" [laughs] I said, "Sure, I can play." I used to listen to the rehearsals and then go home and practice on my steel drums, so I knew all of the parts. When Harry said, "Well, come and play," they were all amazed that I could play all of the parts. Later on, Harry said, "C'mon kid, you're coming on the road with us."

During that first year with Harry, Billy Eaton, one of my musical partners, was hired as the conductor. That's how we met. William Salter, my other songwriting partner, was the bass player for Harry. The three of us have been together for forty-two years.

MD: They got you into songwriting?

Ralph: Yes. When I met Salter and Eaton, they were already songwriters. I had *never* written a song. When we were with Harry, we played a lot in Las Vegas and Lake Tahoe. Now remember, I was seventeen years old and I didn't gamble or drink, so there was nothing for me to do. The show was an hour and ten minutes long. We did one show at 8:00 and another at midnight. So by 2:00 in the morning, I had nothing to do until 8:00 the following evening. So during all of that downtime I would hang around with Salter and Eaton.

The first time I was hanging with them as they were writing, I said, "Well, I have an idea for a song. I don't have a melody, but I have some lyrics." And Bill Salter said, "Just write them down and give them to me." So I did. The song was called "Is It



Love," and when Salter put a melody to it, he changed it to "Where Is The Love," which ended up becoming a hit. That was the first song I wrote.

MD: Do you read music?

Ralph: I read music now, but I never learned to read in school. I learned on the job. When you start doing TV commercials and movies, the music has a lot of accents, and you have to be right on to match the film. You could be playing a bar of four and all of a sudden there will be a measure of 6/4. You have to be able to read in that setting.

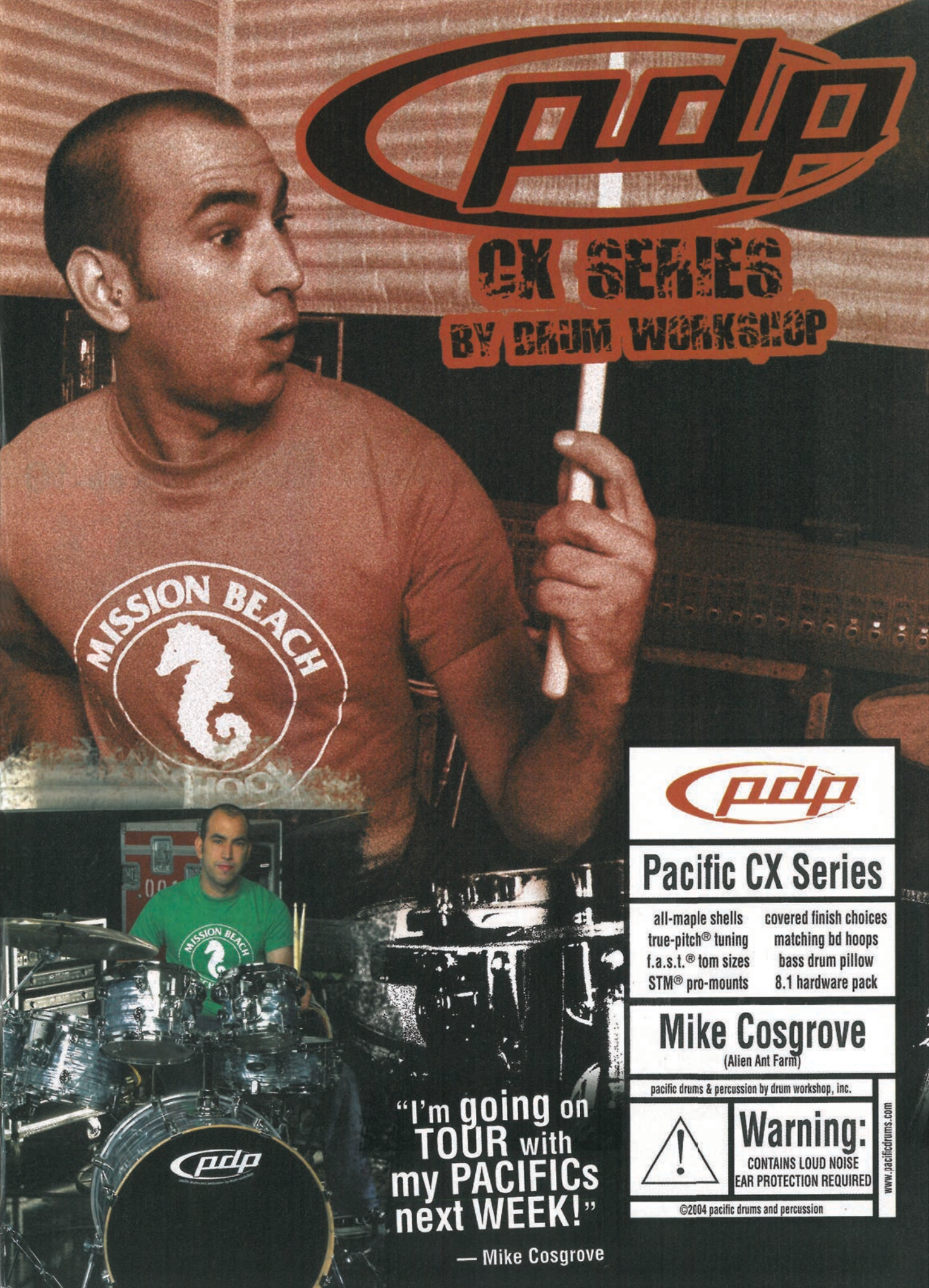
I learned to read by hanging around with a lot of the great drummers from my early days, and one who helped me tremendously was Grady Tate. This is forty years ago. Even though I couldn't read, I had a very photographic memory. If I heard a song once, I knew the arrangement. If it was a really hard part, I'd go to Grady and he would sing it to me. So during the five-minute break of the session, I'd be singing the part to myself. When we'd go back to record the tune, we'd come to that section and I'd nail the part. Everybody would say, "Wow, did you hear that, man? That guy can read his eyes out." [laughs] But that's the way it was. I owe a lot to people like Grady. Bernard Purdie was another.

MD: You've played with so many great drummers in your career.

Ralph: Some of my favorites are Steve Gadd and Harvey Mason. Chris Parker is right up there too. You know who else is a fabulous drummer? Buddy Williams. When I go to a date and see these people, I know it's going to be fun. Besides being great friends, it's almost like a family affair.

Speaking of Steve Gadd, everybody knows how great he is. But what I think makes him really special is that he's open to anything musically. We'd be on a date and I could go to Steve and say, "Check this out. Check *this* vibe." It would be something totally different from what you would normally tell a drummer to play, but Steve would jump right in. He'd not only try it, he'd *do* it and feel it.

I've been on dates with Steve, and after a few songs I'd realize that he'd been playing brushes. No drummer comes to a date and plays with brushes. They want to play with sticks. You know what I'm saying? So creative. He'd be playing a shaker part with the brushes, which would be so percussive.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Ralph MacDonald

We had a ball together in the studio. When you heard the rhythm we would create, we'd be so locked in that it sounded like one person playing.

People always ask me, "What's your favorite percussion instrument?" I don't have a favorite. The music dictates what instrument I play. It could be a tambourine. It could be a finger cymbal. It depends on what the music calls for. That said, I've seen percussionists go to a date with five trunks of gear, and they'd want to play everything in there. People call me The Doctor; I go to a date with a small doctor bag of gear and people ask, "Ralph, where's your stuff?" I say, "Right here in the bag." And they start laughing. Someone once told me, "I worked with a guy the other day who came in with six trunks. The

Ralph's Top-10

It's impossible to list all of the recordings that Ralph MacDonald has made. (We're talking thousands of sides.) So here are ten famous tracks that the percussionist added his magic touch to. By the way, these were all Grammy winners.

"Mockingbird"
(Carly Simon & James Taylor)

"Still Crazy After All These Years"
(Paul Simon)

"Graceland"
(Paul Simon)

"Just The Way You Are"
(Billy Joel)

"Killing Me Softly"
(Roberta Flack)

"Breezin'"
(George Benson)

"Do You Want To Dance?"
(Bette Midler)

"Mirror Mirror"
(Diana Ross)

"Tradewinds"
(The Winans)

Taxi TV Theme
(Bob James)

MD Radio

cartage company made more money than he did." [laughs]

MD: You just mentioned that the music dictates what instrument you play. Do you think that way because you're a songwriter?

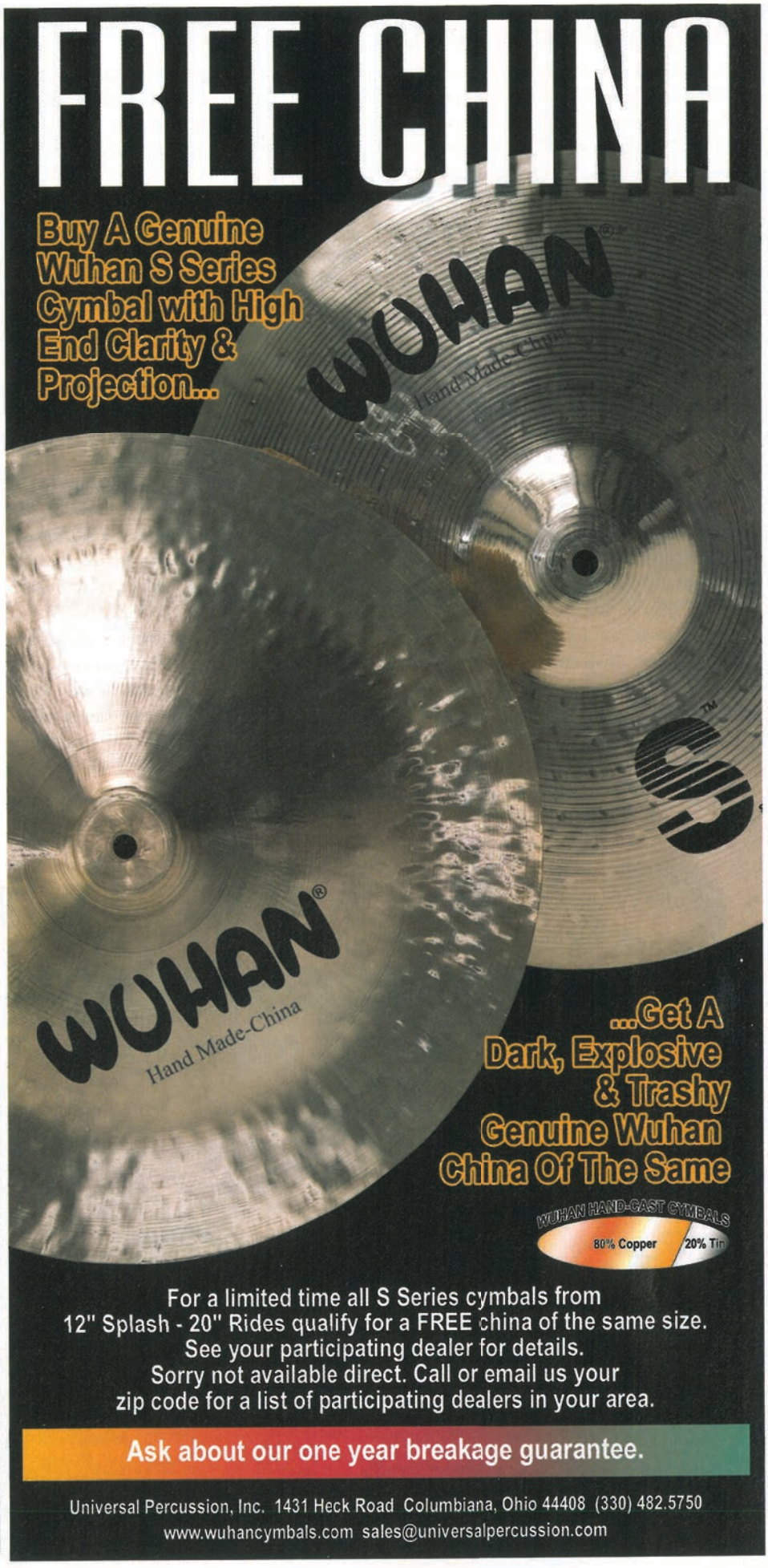
Ralph: Definitely. I approach music and percussion playing as a songwriter. There's a form to any song—you have an introduction, a verse, a chorus, there might be a bridge, then you go back to the verse, then back to the chorus, then fade. The introduction doesn't sound like the verse. The verse doesn't sound like the chorus. And the chorus doesn't sound like the bridge. They're all different moods. I would never play something in the introduction and continue playing it throughout the whole song, which a lot of guys do. I approach each section differently.

Sometimes when I'm doing overdubs the producer will say, "Ralph, just listen and play what you want." I'll listen, and then the producer will ask, "Ready to start?" I say, "Yeah. Let's start at the fade." "The fade?" "Yeah, start at the fade," because the fade has the chorus vibe. When you get to the fade it should be cooking like a mother. The fade *always* sounds good. So I record my part on the fade, and now everybody's saying, "That sounds good." Okay, this section happens earlier in the song? "Yeah, in the chorus." So I play the same part in the choruses. All of a sudden the song takes on a different shape. So I build my parts within the different sections of the tunes.

The problem with some musicians today is, they never had to accompany a singer, they just play. There was no electronic music back when I was coming up. It was acoustic, so you *had* to listen to each other. That's how we created, that's how we played, off of each other. It was all about the vibe.

I remember playing with Gadd, Richard Tee, and Marcus Miller. We'd be playing in the studio, and all of a sudden, there was this new break in the song that never existed before. But we came up with it because we were listening to each other. Then people would want to know, "Who did that arrangement?" Well, that's *our* arrangement.

I remember doing a date with Quincy Jones when I was his contractor. I'd be the one who would put the band together, and it would usually be Steve Gadd, Anthony Jackson, Eric Gale, Richard Tee, and me.



We were out in California doing an album, and Quincy needed another song to complete the album. He pulled me aside and said, "MacZ"—he called me MacZ—"I need another track. Think you all can make up something for me?" "Shit, yeah." So we started making a groove. Next thing you know, we came up with the song "What Makes You Feel Like Doing Stuff Like That." Remember that one? *Sounds...And Stuff Like That!* became the title of Quincy's album, and the song "Stuff Like That" was a big hit. He got Ashford & Simpson to write some lyrics and Chaka Khan to sing the vocals. But that was a song we made up on the spot in the studio.

MD: Do you get called in to create loops?

Ralph: Oh yeah, but I don't do that anymore. I have my own setup at my house. I did my new album *Home Grown* right here at home. You want me to overdub on your album? You're going to have to fly me out to California, pay for a hotel, rent a studio, and pay me. Instead, why not just send your files straight to me? I'll record my parts at my house. That's what I do now if I have to do overdubbing.

That said, I prefer to record my stuff live with other musicians. I feel that when you use real musicians, your music stands up and will take the test of time. Look at all the old CPI recordings. That stuff still sounds great.

MD: All the Stax and Motown stuff, too.

Ralph: There you go, fresh as ever. All that still stands up, because it was real. You could feel it.

MD: How do you feel about electronics?

Ralph: Electronics are good for certain situations. There have been a couple of times when I'd be at home writing and doing demos, and I'd use a drum machine just to keep time. I could do it myself, but sometimes it's easier to use a machine.

MD: You've been fortunate to play with so many great drummers. But how do you deal with a difficult drummer, say someone who's not sensitive or who doesn't have the experience of playing with a percussionist?

Ralph: It's very hard. And there are lots of that kind of player out there. [laughs] I'm just happy that at this stage of my career and life I don't have to deal with a lot of them. I get to pick and choose. If somebody asks me to do a gig, I want to know who's playing. I don't ask about money, I want to know who's in the rhythm section. If it's one of my guys, cool.

To me, a drummer is supposed to play time. If I want a melody played, I'm going to give it to the saxophone. I'm not going to give it to the drummer, unless it's a drum thing. To me, the drummer should be all about the groove. Some people think it's all about solos and shit, but really, it's all about the groove.

MD: If a drummer was going to audition for you, what qualities would you look for?

Ralph: Well, first thing, I'm not interested in flashy drummers. I'm interested in drummers who can play time. A lot of drummers speed up and slow down. You've got to be able to keep time. That's a big quality.

I've found that with good musicians, there's only a few percentage points' difference between them. When you get a guy who gives you 100%, how can you complain? But when you get a guy like Steve Gadd, Harvey Mason, or Chris Parker to come in and give you 101%, that one percent takes the music so much further. That's what makes these guys special.

There are a lot of great drummers

Stuff Talk
Chris Parker On Ralph

David Sokol

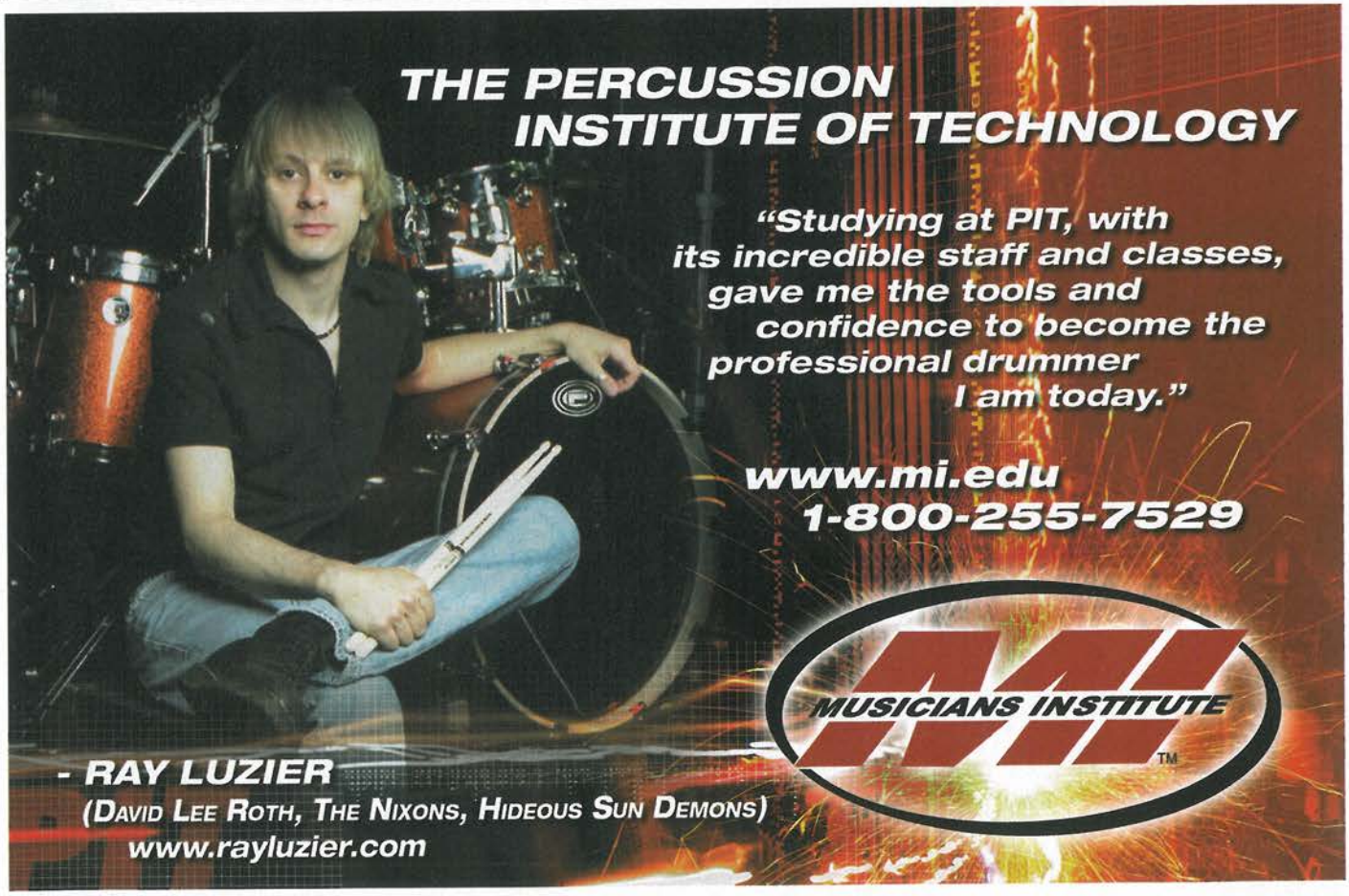
For young readers who may not be familiar with Chris Parker, go back and check out the records he made in the '70s when he was part of the funky, jazzy R&B band called Stuff. The group featured some legendary players. Besides Parker, Steve Gadd was also on drums, the late Richard Tee was on keyboards, Gordon Edwards played bass, and Eric Gale and Cornell Dupree were on guitars. Talk about a groovin' band.

For those who do remember Stuff, you'll soon have the opportunity to hear the old songs with a new twist. A singer who calls himself "Brand New Old School" (aka Oscar Davis) is adding lyrics and vocals to the group's original instrumental tracks.

Chris Parker has maintained a successful thirty-year career, recording albums, jingles, and movie soundtracks, and touring. In 1986, Parker landed the drum chair in the house band on *Saturday Night Live*, where he stayed for six years. These days he's recording and performing with his own band, Toph-e & The PussyCats, as well as teaching classes at The Collective. Chris also recently recorded albums with Paul Taylor, Eric Marienthal, Original Love, and Hyper Active (with bassist Will Lee and keyboardist Chris Hajian), and he's on Ralph MacDonald's latest, *Home Grown*.

We asked Chris to share his feelings about playing with the master percussionist, whom the drummer has collaborated with for years. "Ralph's a genius with the parts he comes up with," Parker says. "He's so musical, and he always seems to play the exact right part with just the right sound. It's the way he chooses what instrument to play and occupy the right spot in the track that is so amazing—whether it's a shaker, triangle, bongo, conga, or something he made up with plastic toy hammers or hubcaps. When you listen back to a track Ralph has played on, you might not be able to pick out exactly what he's done. But if you take his part away, it's like, 'Hey, what happened to the groove?'

"I like to compare Ralph to a fine painter," Chris continues. "In a painting, you have the perspective, the figures, the foreground, and the background. And then, when you add that one color, the painting comes to life. That's what Ralph does. He's the grease, the glue, he puts the focus on the groove, and he adds just the right touch. Ralph's amazing."



"MY DW DRUMS TRULY ARE
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- NEIL PEART

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around, but there aren't too many that like to groove with the rhythm section. And that's especially true for percussionists. A lot of percussionists can get in the way. When a drummer sees me on a date, he smiles because he knows that if he wants to stretch out, it's no problem. I'm going to keep the time.

MD: You've done so many recordings that it's impossible to list them all. But are there any that you consider to be memorable?

Ralph: Well, it's funny, because I was lucky enough to play on a few songs that were hits that I actually wrote. But I can remember playing on George Benson's album *Breezin'*. We had so much fun in the studio doing that one. I can also remember doing some dates with Aretha Franklin at Atlantic that were just fabulous. I also remember doing dates with Roberta Flack at Regent Sound in New York City.

I did some memorable dates for Quincy Jones. He and I thought the same way. Maybe it's because Quincy and I are both Pisces. [laughs] I would listen to one of his tracks, go out in the studio, and before he could say something to me, I would say the exact thing he was thinking to him. It was weird. He didn't speak, I didn't speak, but we were thinking the same thing.

MD: Do you have a different approach to the studio versus live?

Ralph: Live is the true test of being a musician. In a studio you can set up and say, "Let me go back and do that again." Live, you've got to nail it the *first* time. You get one shot.

People ask me, "Do you get nervous before you play?" No, I get joy! I can't wait to hit the stage. That's how prepared I am and how focused I am when it comes to the music.

With Jimmy Buffett, we play three shows a week—three or four days out of seven. That can get very boring if you don't know how to occupy your time. I use that time to do a lot of writing. I get more rest when I'm working with Buffett than I do when I'm home. [laughs]

MD: Back in January, at Yamaha's Groove Night, you seemed like you were having a blast.

Ralph: Oh man, *that's* the kind of gig I like. It's a breeze. And no drummer can take a solo. [laughs]

MD: And Rick Marotta is the perfect MC.

Ralph: Years ago, I put Rick in Roberta Flack's band. After he came out of her band, his stock shot up a thousand percent.

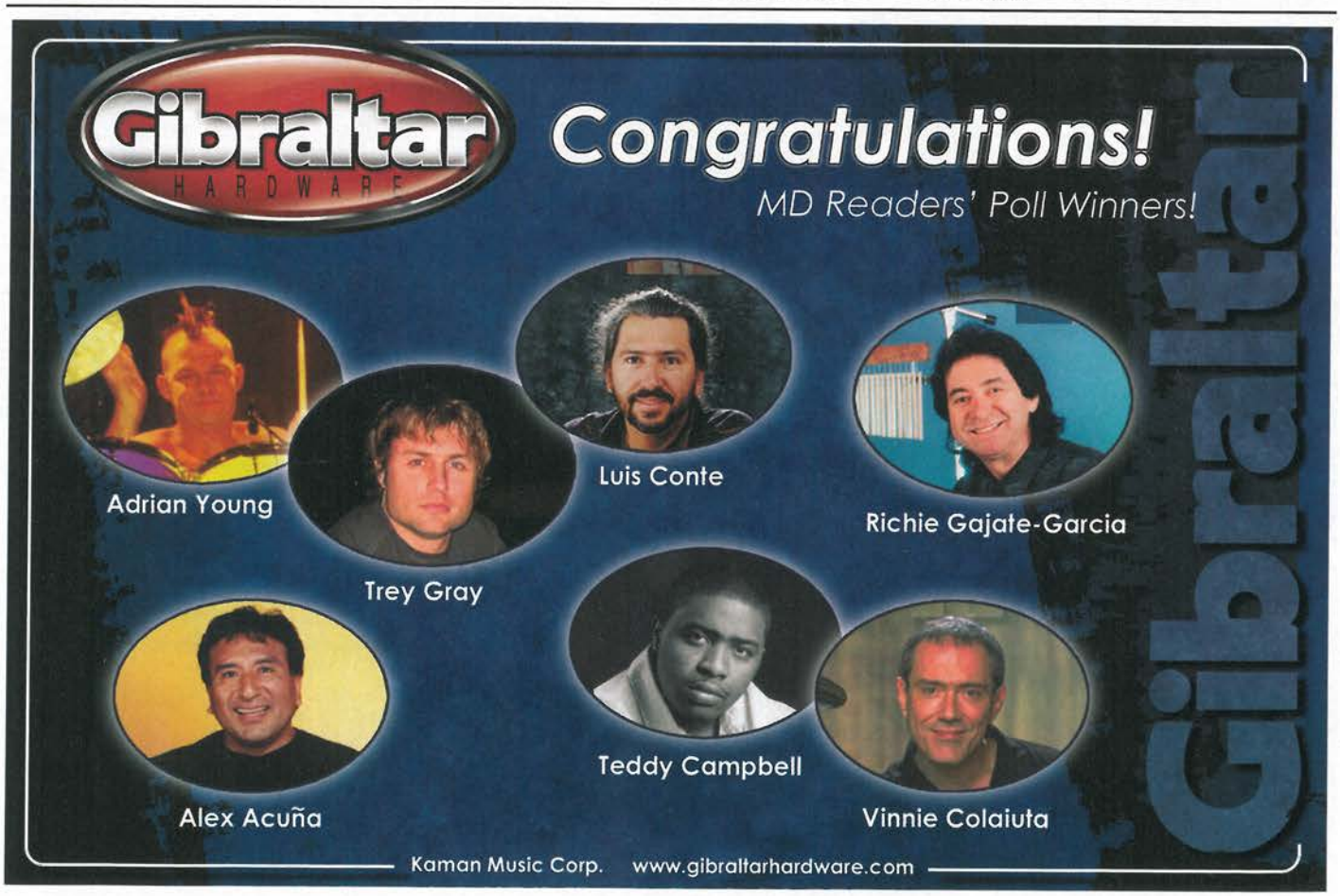
MD: You're responsible for putting a lot of guys on the map.

Ralph: Well, a lot was due to the fact that I've had my own studio since the '70s. Most musicians didn't have a studio back then. I had my own studio because I had a lot of productions going on. So that meant I hired a lot of people.

I remember doing an album for Grover Washington Jr. I always had Jon Faddis contract the horns for me. One time Jon couldn't do the gig, so he said, "I'm going to send a new guy to you." I said no. "But this guy is good. Don't worry about it." It turned out to be Wynton Marsalis. [laughs]

MD: Tom Scott says that you turned him on to the whole New York scene.

Ralph: Oh yeah, with the "New York connection" band. Tom then turned me on when he went out with the Ravi Shankar/George Harrison band and they were playing those Indian rhythms. Those guys are great musicians. I've played all kinds of time, but those Indian rhythms are fascinating.



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MD: How do you like to record percussion?

Ralph: I think the most important thing with recording percussion is the placement of the mic's. Some engineers know how to place a mic' and just which one to use. I have a big problem with engineers if I'm playing conga drums and I go into the control room and the drums sound like bongos. The engineer needs to come out into the room and hear what the drums really sound like.

The engineers I grew up with used to get out of the control room and listen to you play in the room and hear the sound. Then they'd go back into the control room and try to duplicate that sound. That's the sound, in the room. Again, I like a natural sound. There are two engineers that I love to work with, Elliot Scheiner and Al Schmitt.

MD: Would you say you're a percussionist first or a songwriter?

Ralph: I became a musician first and *then* I became a songwriter. I didn't come in this business saying I wanted to be this great producer or this great songwriter. All I wanted to do was play music with good musicians.

I took it all in steps. I learned what playing music was supposed to be about, and then I went into writing and learned all about that. Then I learned about producing. Then with the money I made from the songs I wrote, I was able to open a studio. If you're a songwriter and you've got a publishing company, you've got to have a place to work. I had to keep renting these studios, so finally I built my own. As a result, I started doing real albums, not just demos. So with the production deals I had, I was able to hire other musicians.

MD: I'd like to ask you about some of the drummers you've worked with. What comes to mind when I mention Billy Cobham?

Ralph: Great, great, fabulous drummer. I love him. I got to play with Billy on a Broadway show called *The Great White Hope*. Billy was the drummer and I was the percussionist. We laid down some incredible stuff and had so much fun.

MD: Bernard Purdie.

Ralph: "Pretty" Purdie taught me a lot about the groove. As a matter of fact, I used to try to double Bernard's part on my conga drums because it felt so good. He still has it. *Nobody* plays like him.

MD: How about Tony Williams?

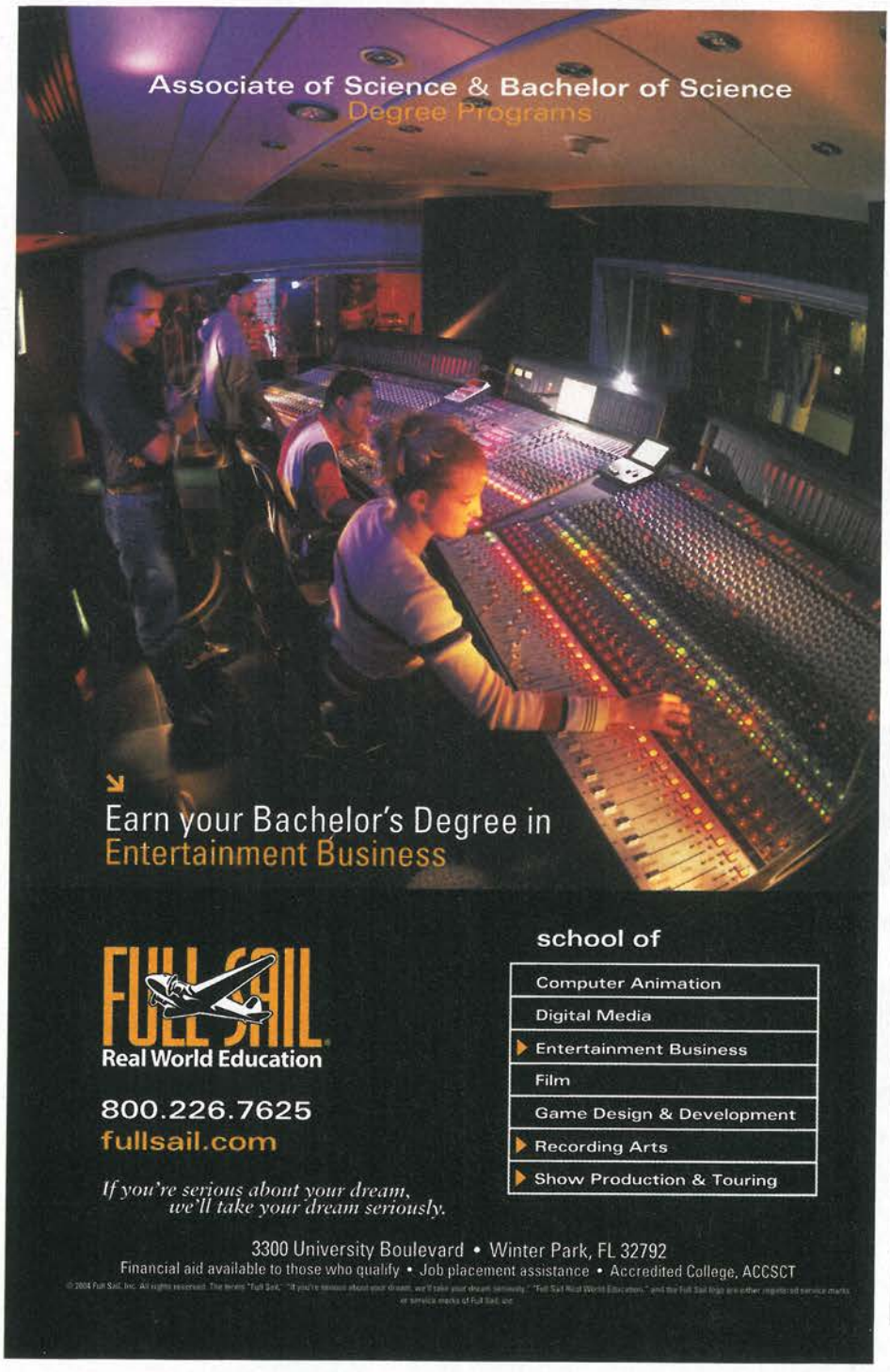
Ralph: Oh, there will never be another Tony Williams. I remember when Tony passed away. I was talking to Ron Carter, who called me to tell me the news. I asked Ron, "Tell me, what is it you'll miss most about Tony?" He said, "Playing with him." That's what it is with Tony. You just had to work with him and play with him to see how nice it was. All you had to do was listen, and you could tell he was special.

MD: Yogi Horton.

Ralph: Oh man, Yogi Horton. That man should still be alive. Talk about a groove master. He could always lay it down. He's another one we lost too soon. Yogi was a fabulous player. I used him on a track we did with Grover Washington Jr.

MD: Steve Jordan.

Ralph: Steve is another great one. And he's come a long way. You've got to remember, I watched guys like Jordan grow up. They used to come in my studio, sit down, and just be in awe of what we were doing, with their mouths wide open.



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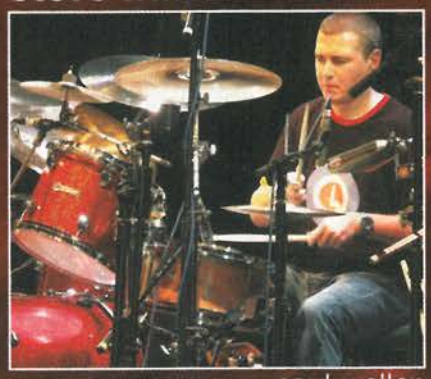

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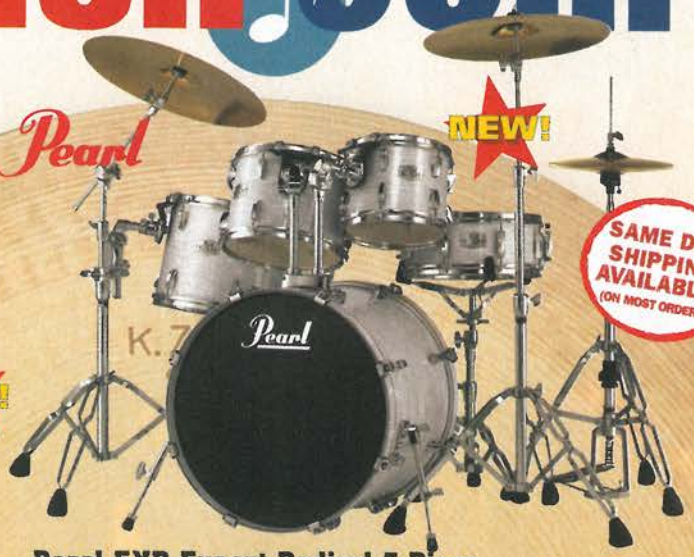

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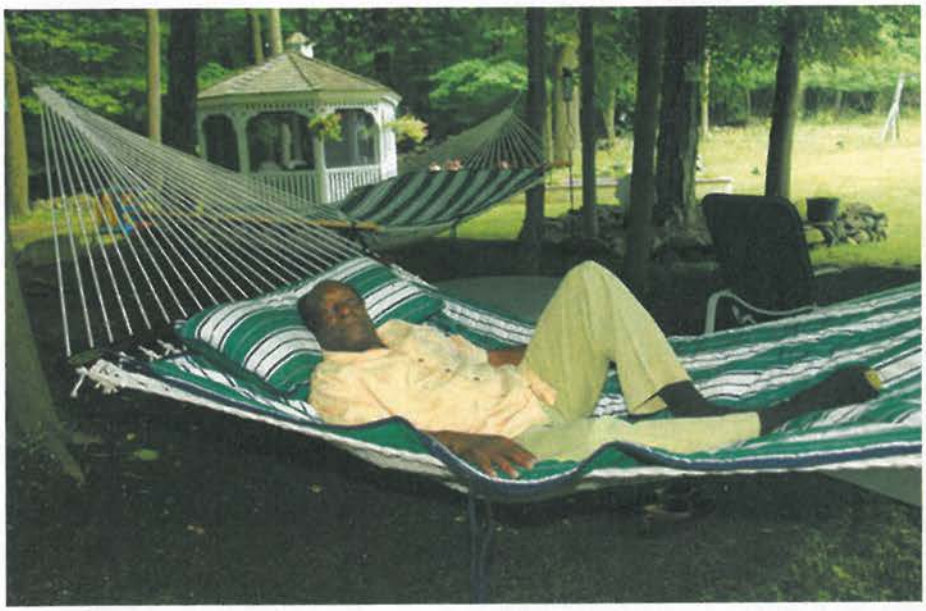
And to see Steve mature into who he is now is just fabulous.

MD: Ndugu Chancler.

Ralph: I'm sort of partial to Ndugu because he's another guy who's got a groove and a half—just a great, great feeling. I *love* playing percussion with him. This man has been in the industry for years. Most guys have a five- or six-year run. But Ndugu's been doing it since the '80s. His name is still prominent.

MD: Let's talk a bit more about percussion. When you listen to some of the old Motown stuff with percussionist Jack Ashford from The Funk Brothers, the tambourine is almost a main instrument.

Ralph: That's right. Jack's a genius with a tambourine. Matter of fact, I did an overdub once for somebody from Atlanta where the only percussion on the tape was Jack playing the tambourine. When I heard the track I said, "Look, we have to keep that tambourine. That part is so great, I'm going to play around it."



MD: People think that anybody can pick up a tambourine and play it. But to play it the right way is not so easy. How would you describe your style?

Ralph: Well, my style, believe it or not, is straight from church. I learned from a girl who was a gospel singer. She used to take a small tambourine with a head on it and play it on her butt, and you would be amazed. It's all about the technique. You've got to have a strong arm to play a tambourine. It looks easy, but it's not. You play it for thirty seconds and your hand feels like it's going to fall off.

MD: What advice do you have for percussionists and drummers coming up today?

Ralph: Always keep your mind open to the music. Don't get stuck on only one kind of music. Music is the international language that speaks to the world, and if you want to speak to the world, you should listen to all kinds of music. When I was young, I used to put on Tito Puente records and play along with them. Then I'd put on all the R&B stuff and play along to that. Play to everything.

I've had a good life. Music is the love of my life, and I sing my thanks and praises to the Lord every day. Everybody knows the deal. When you're younger, you do stupid stuff. But as you get a bit older, you get wiser and you get a little more mellow, and hopefully you get a little wisdom. You start to get comfortable with yourself. Don't come in with the attitude, "I'm going to play great so I get this gig." If you're there, you've already *got* the gig.

When drummers and percussionists see me on the gig with them, all of a sudden they want to show me all they can do. Hey, *I* didn't hire you. You better stop all that stuff and just play the music. [laughs] You've got to satisfy the record company, and you've got to satisfy the artist. I also always try to make the producer happy because he's the person that hired me. But remember, you've *always* got to satisfy the music.

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–shadows fall
#1–up & coming

lars ulrich
–metallica
#2–metal

john blackwell
–prince
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#5–educational video / dvd
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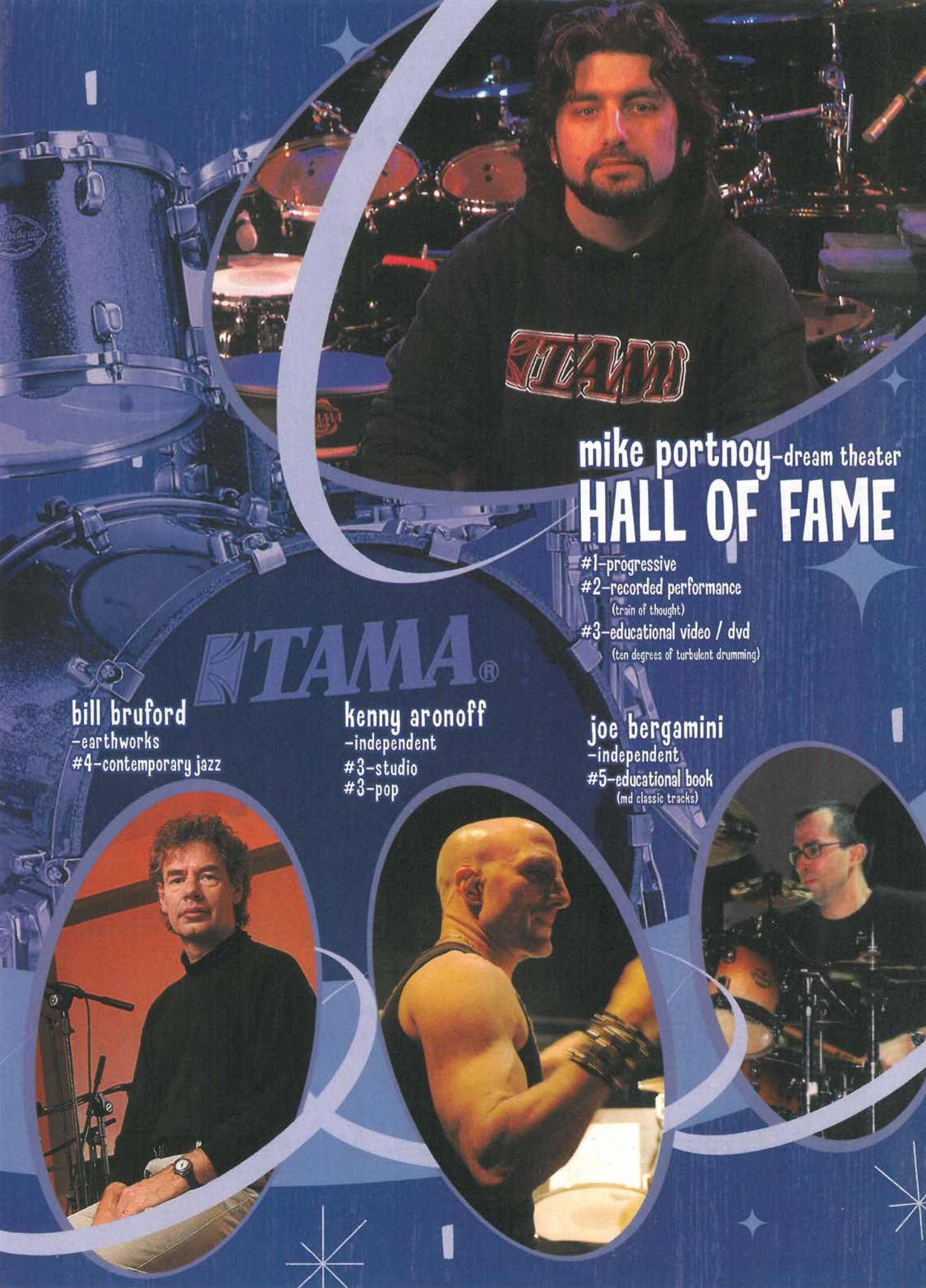

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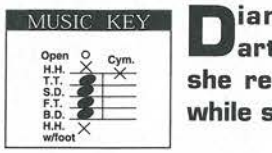
-independent
#3-studio
#3-pop

joe bergamini
-independent
#5-educational book
(md classic tracks)

Drummers Of Diana Krall

A Style & Analysis

by Dave Miele



Diana Krall is one of the most popular jazz artists on the current music scene. As such, she requires great sensitivity from her drummers, while still allowing them ample room to shine.

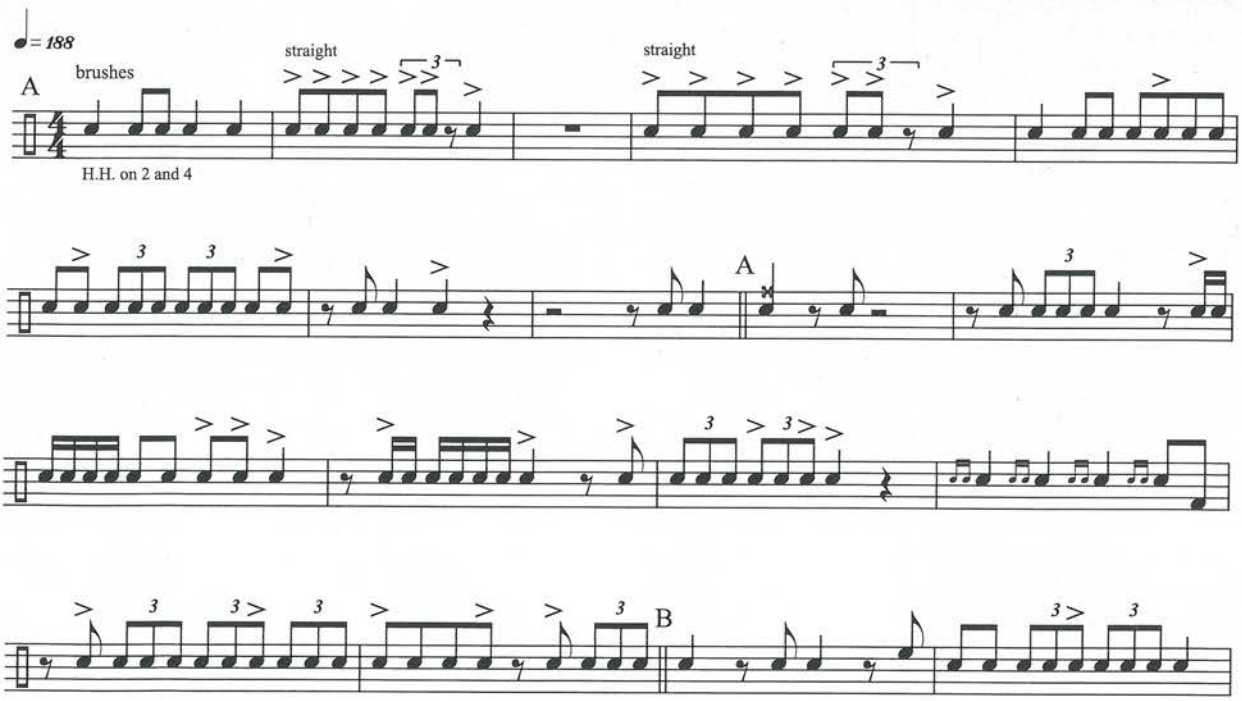
Brush mastery is an absolute *must* for Miss Krall, simply because many of her tunes don't require sticks. She also has an obvious affection for brush solos, since most of her albums have included at least one. Economic soloing is another prerequisite.

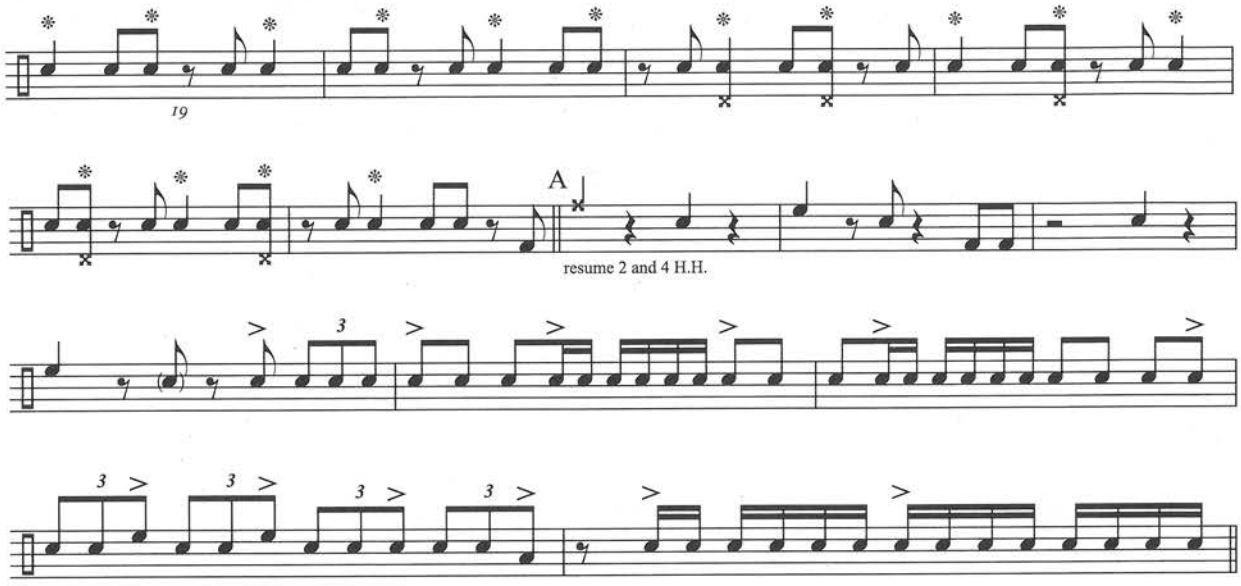
Most of Krall's commercially available recordings thus far have relied on the talents of drummers Jeff Hamilton and Lewis Nash. Both players have brought something unique to her sound. Let's first take a closer look at Jeff Hamilton's playing on Diana's debut album, *Stepping Out*.

"This Can't Be Love"

One can fully appreciate the "architectural" nature of Jeff's phrasing in this thirty-two-bar solo (played over a walking bass line). Note the use of open space in the first A section, while 16th notes and triplets begin to creep in during the last A.

The bridge (at measure 19) consists of a polyrhythmic three-beat cycle utilizing two-handed brush sweeps (indicated with an asterisk), with the hi-hat added to the cycle at bar 21. The first four bars of the final A section contain more space before exploding with accented 16th-note and triplet figures. (The solo begins at the 2:16 mark of the recording.)

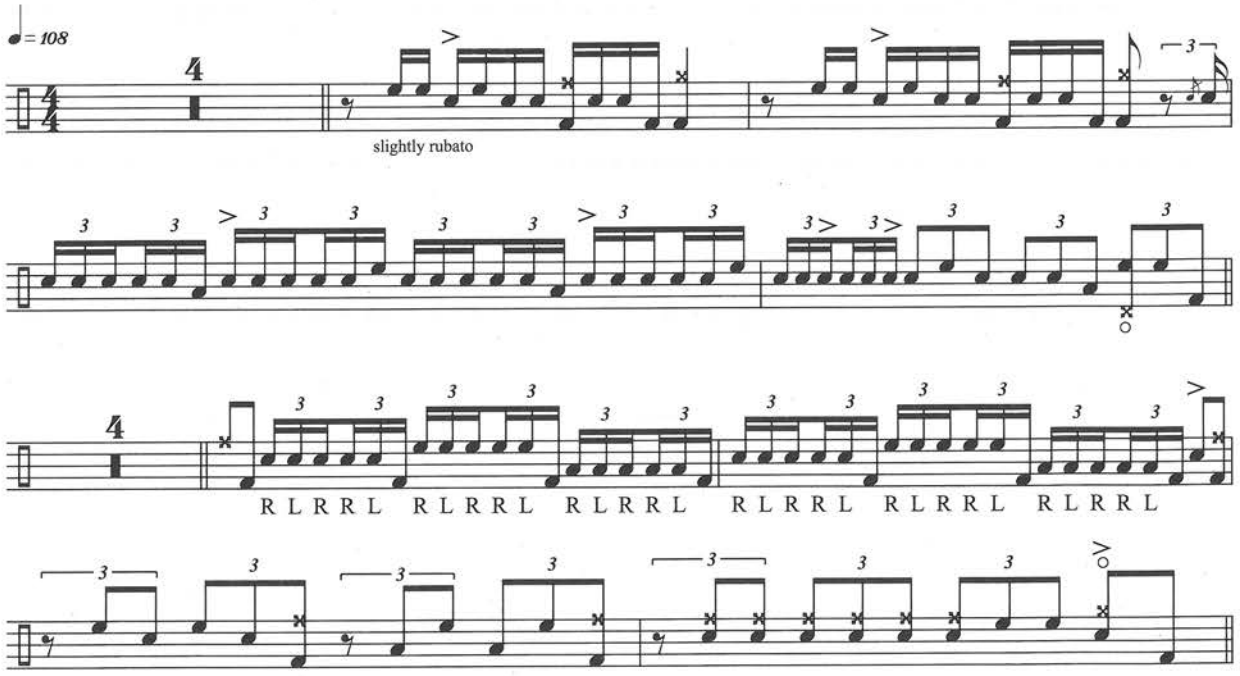




"Frim Fram Sauce"

The following four-bar breaks start with a one-bar 16th-note phrase that has a slightly "out of time" feel. The phrase is repeated, followed by a string of 16th-note triplets that change to 8th-note triplets. The switch to larger beat subdivisions is quite dramatic.

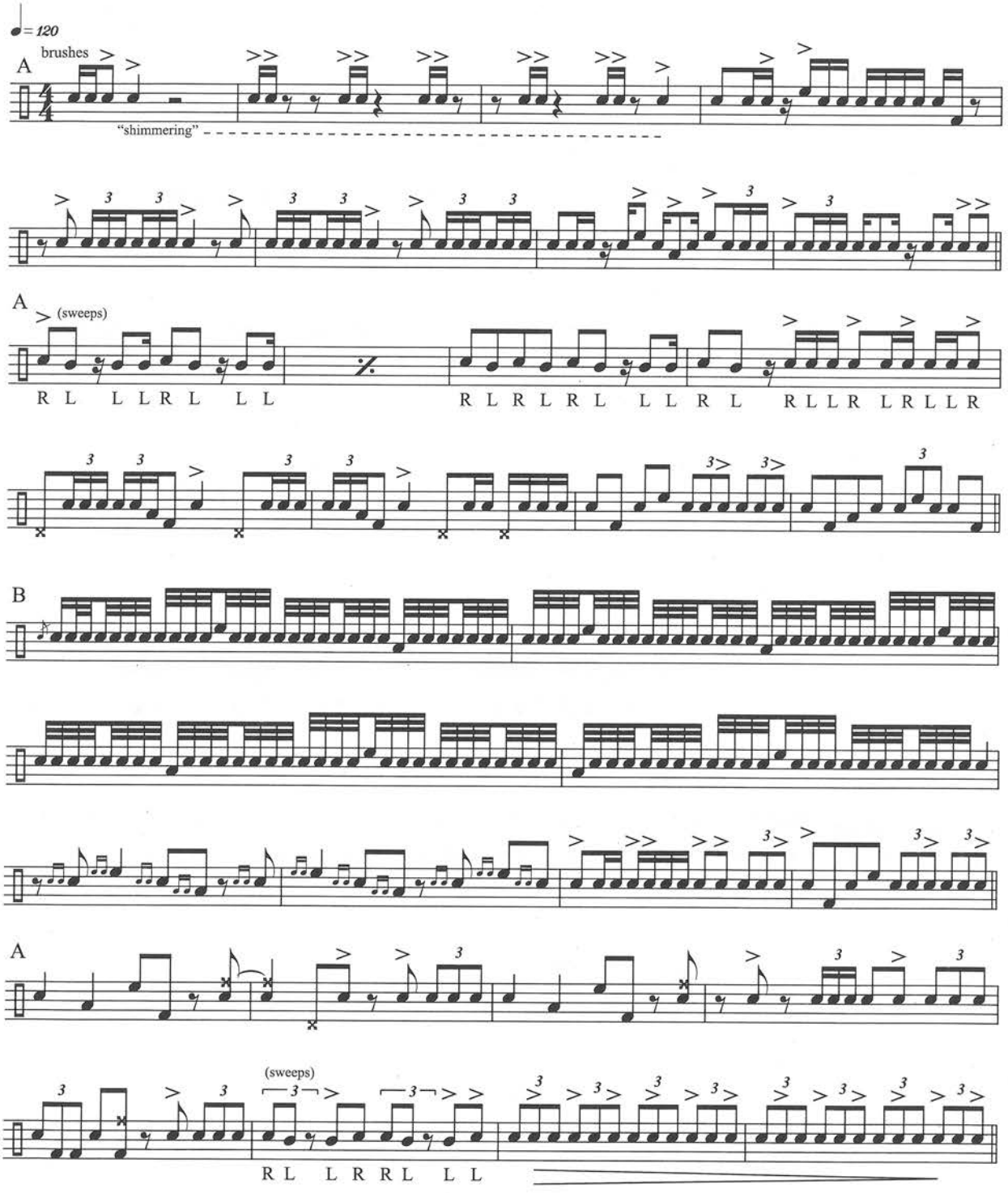
The next four-bar break employs a paradiddle-diddle around the kit, with the last note of each played on the bass drum. Triplet figures then lead to an accent on the fourth beat of the final bar. (2:29)



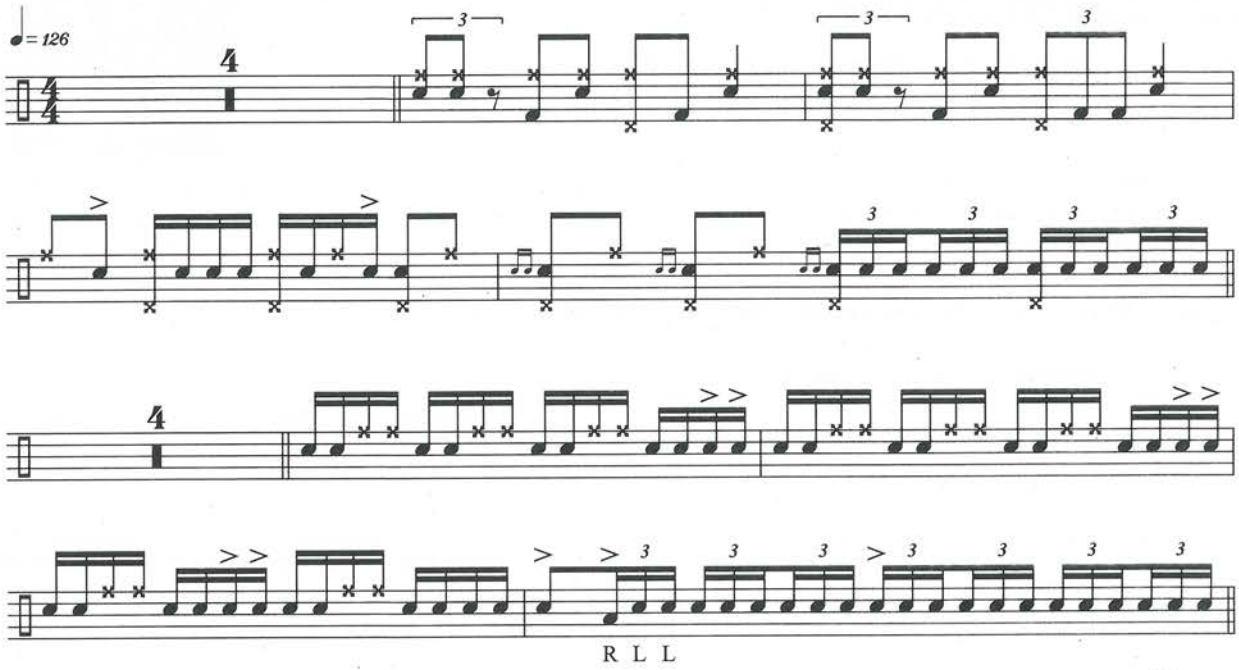
Clearly, Jeff Hamilton played a major role in the success of Diana Krall's debut album. Let's now take a look at Krall's follow-up, *Only Trust Your Heart*, with Lewis Nash on drums.

Lewis Nash

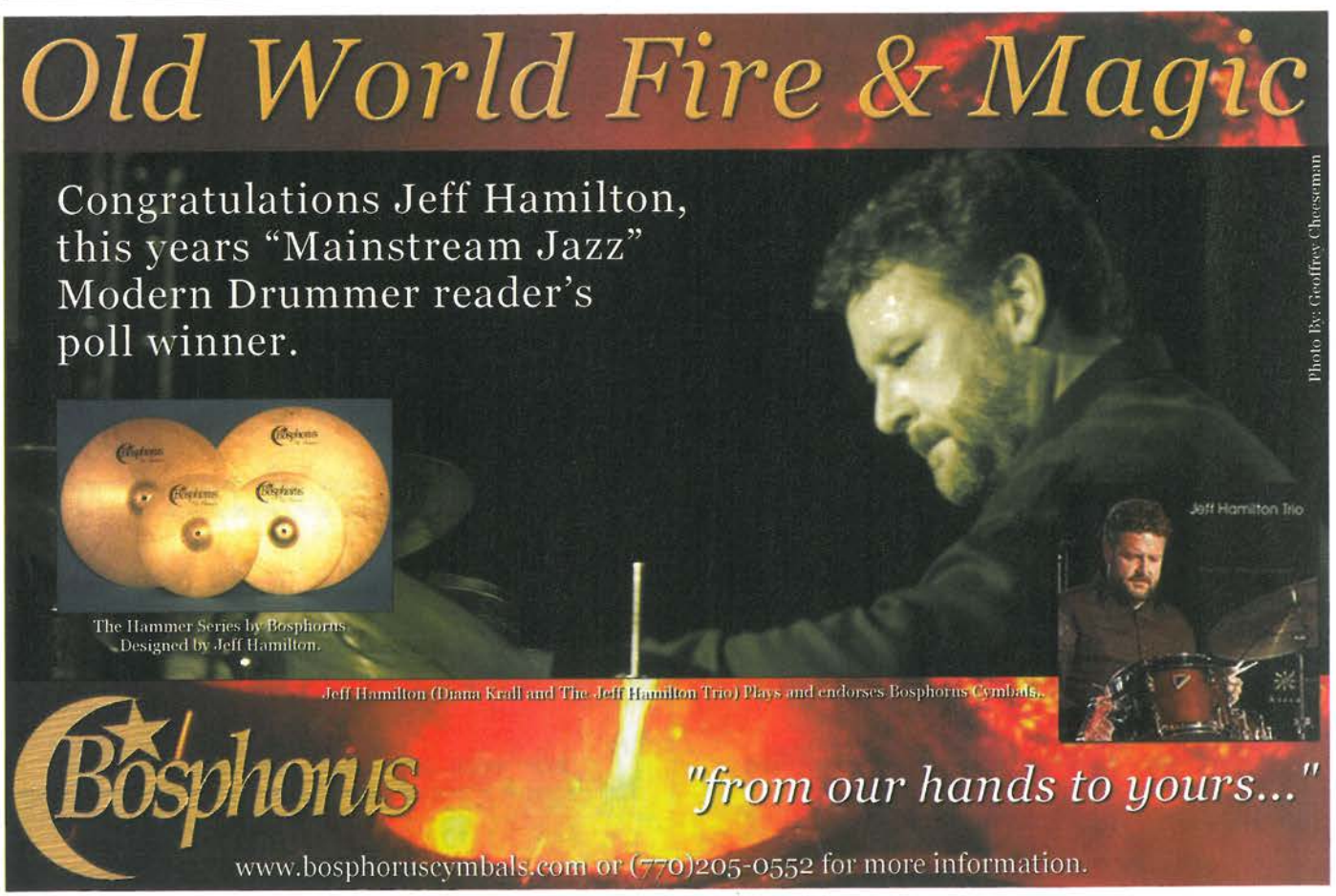
"Broadway"

The following thirty-two-bar solo showcases Nash's brush mastery. The opening phrase contains a "shimmering" brush effect played with one hand on the snare drum, while accented figures are played with the other. Nash's execution is clean and crisp throughout, particularly at the bridge with its blazing 32nd notes and drags moving around the kit. No question, Nash is as comfortable with brushes as he is with sticks on this tune. (4:17)

"I've Got The World On A String"

The "fours" on this recording are played with sticks, and they employ some nice hi-hat work. Lewis relies heavily on interplay between snare and cymbals. And note the dramatic impact of the *single* floor tom note in the last bar of the second "four." (3:32)



Lewis Nash's playing throughout *Only Trust Your Heart* is magnificent, definitely worthy of closer examination.



The Triplet-Duple

A Hot Lick For Your Hands

by Chet Doboe

The triplet-duple is a fun and useful pattern consisting of five-stroke singles, which are performed as a combination of a 16th-note triplet and two 16ths. Chaining together several triplet-duples can create a driving yet flowing groove. And as you'll see in the following examples, adding accents here and there creates interesting and colorful seasoning to an already cool mix of rhythm.

The following sixteen examples showcase just a few of the creative possibilities for the triplet-duple pattern. Once you have them together, try your hand at the solo exercise on the following page, which highlights some of the creative possibilities of the triplet-duple.

It's always exciting to take any idea and twist it, bend it, and turn it upside down. Be sure to see what *you* can come up with for the triplet-duple. (One idea you might want to try is playing all of the examples with a swing interpretation.)

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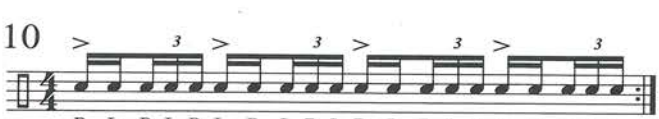
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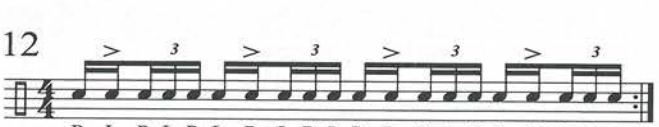
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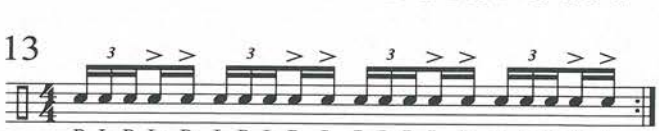
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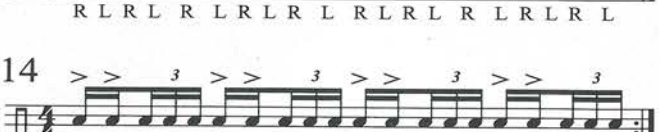
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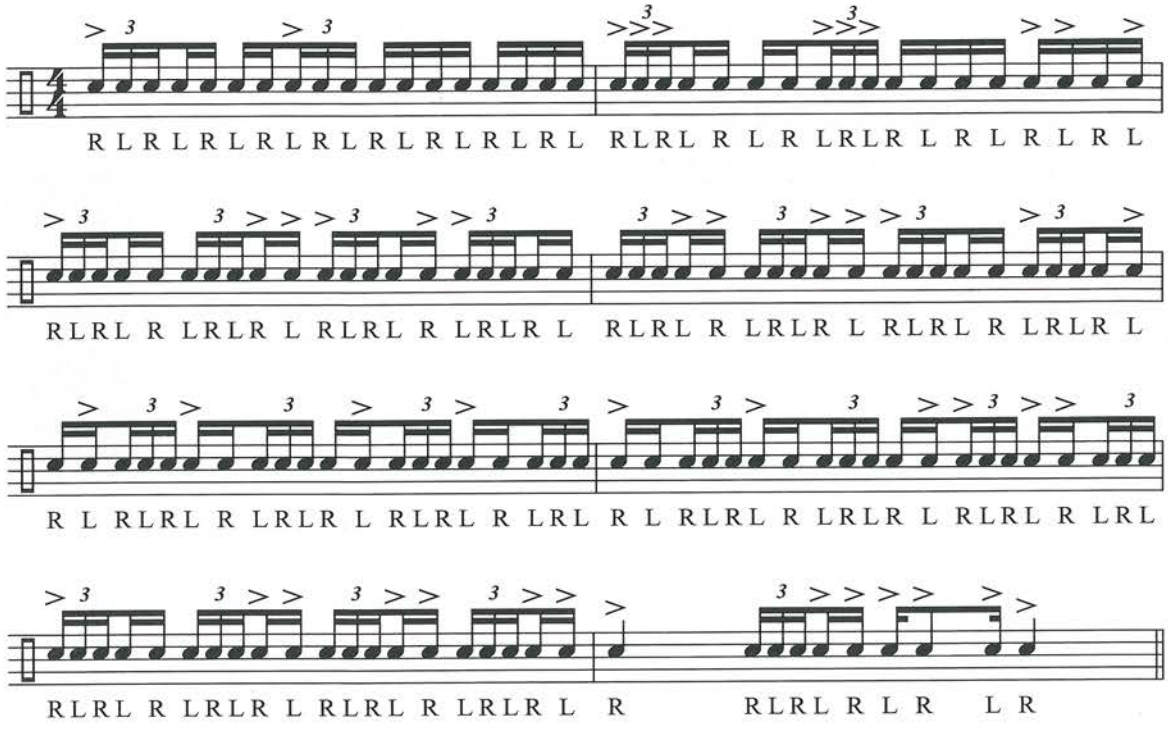
16

Solo Exercise

Chet Doboe is an acknowledged master of rudimental drumming. He leads the successful percussion group Hip Pickles.

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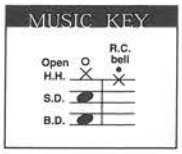
Beat Enhancing

Ghost Strokes And Other Cool Techniques

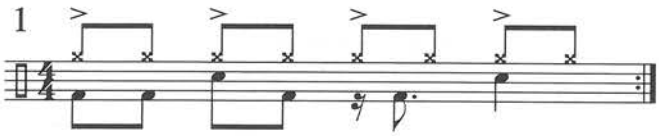
by Rod Morgenstein



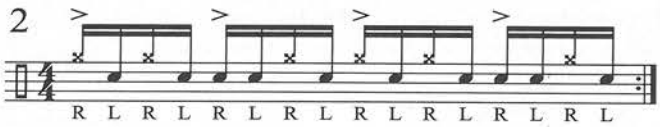
You can get a lot of mileage out of a single kick and snare pattern. All it takes is a bass drum, snare, hi-hat, and ride cymbal. These four drumset components, along with a bit of imagination, offer up many exciting rhythmic and sound possibilities.

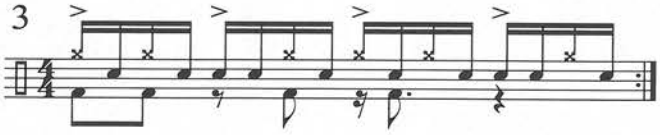
Take, for example, the following standard groove.

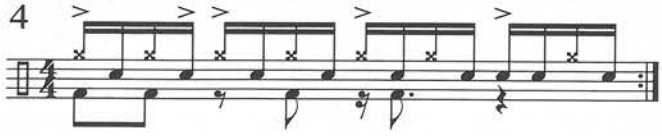
1

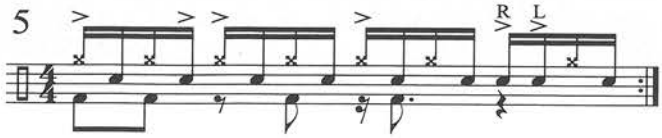


A simple ghost-stroke pattern, like alternating 16th notes, can add a lot to the groove. In the following example, all left-hand strokes are played as quietly as possible on the snare, with the right hand playing 8th notes on the hi-hat and moving over to the snare to play the backbeats. Start with the hand pattern.

2

Now add the bass drum to complete the beat.

3

Each of the examples that follow build on this ghost-stroke technique to further enhance the original groove. Example 4 makes the beat a bit funky by syncopating the snare (anticipating the backbeat) on the last 16th note of beat 1.

4

Example 5 adds another accent to the snare (played with the left hand) on the second 16th note of beat 4.

5

An open hi-hat sound adds to the sound color mix on the last 8th note of beat 4.

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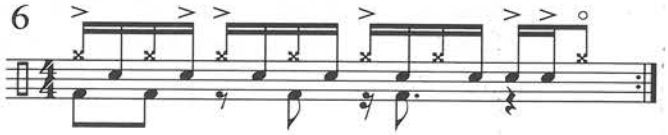
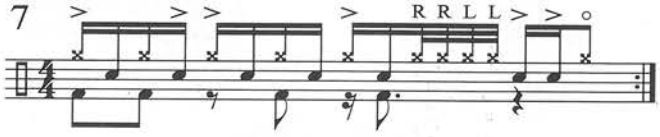
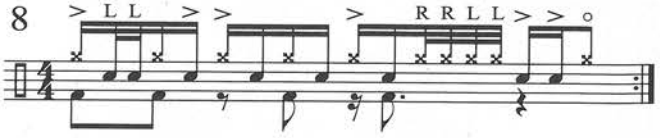

"Doubling up" on the hi-hat can be an extremely effective groove-enhancing technique. In example 7, four 32nd notes are played as double strokes on the upbeat of beat 3.

7



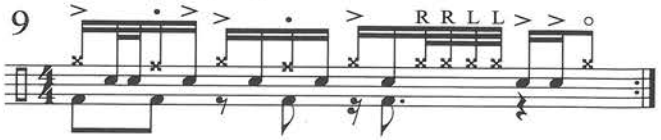
In example 8, a double ghost stroke (two 32nd notes played with the left hand) is played on the second 16th note of beat 1. A double ghost note sounds like a ruff and has an interesting rudimental quality that works well with funk grooves.

8



And finally, example 9 adds yet another sound to the beat by using the bell of the ride cymbal.

9



Single and double ghost strokes, open hi-hat sounds, doubling up on the hi-hat, anticipating the backbeat, and incorporating the bell of the ride cymbal can enhance "regular"-sounding grooves in many cool ways. But always remember that in drumming, a little can go a long way.

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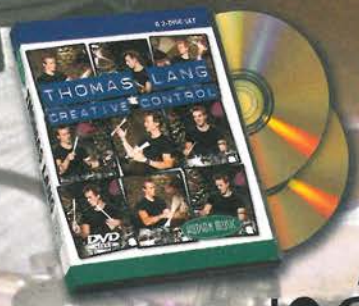

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Finger Eleven's *Rich Beddoe*

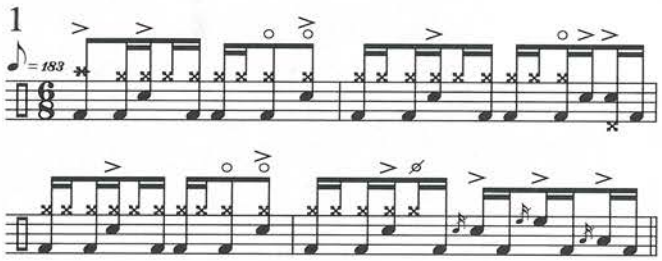
by Ed Breckenfeld

Three's the charm for Finger Eleven. The self-titled third album from this Canadian alt/metal quintet is their biggest success to date. But the acoustic hit "One Thing" gives little indication of the drumming pleasures contained on the rest of the CD. Rich Beddoe's playing is powerful and confident, as he creates engaging grooves throughout the album. (The initial release also contains a bonus DVD with some good live and studio footage of the left-handed Beddoe.) Here are a few highlights.

"Other Light"

Finger Eleven opens with a song in 6/8 time featuring this drum beat designed around a bass guitar riff. Note the effectiveness of the open hi-hat work. (0:22)

1



"Complicated Questions"

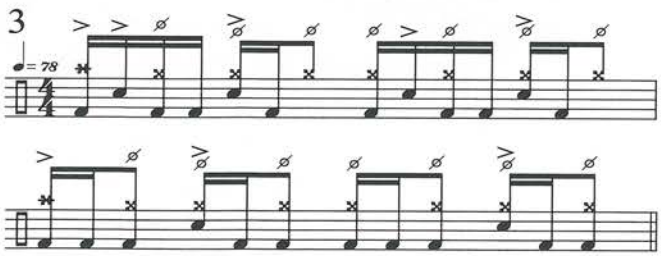
Check out Rich's great linear drum pattern for this tune. (0:00)

2

"Stay In Shadow"

Here's another guitar riff–driven song, with a drum beat to match. This pattern comes from the chorus. (0:25)

3



"Good Times"

This single cruises along on Rich's 16th-note low-tom pattern, which infuses the track with a compelling dance groove. (0:22)

4

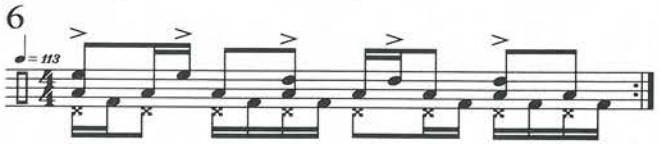
"Absent Elements"

Once again, Beddoe locks his chorus beat to Sean Anderson's bass guitar part. The snare placement makes this one stand out. (0:52)

5

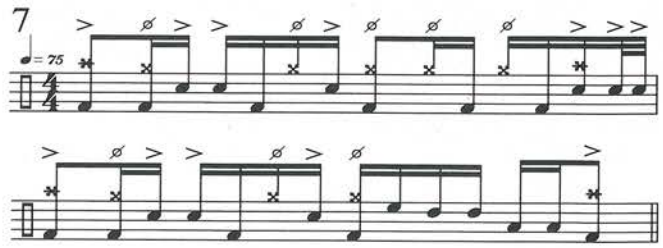
"Conversations"

This cool groove opens the song, propelled by a three-against-two polyrhythm on the toms, with the bass drum filling the holes and a driving 8th-note hi-hat foot pattern.

6

"The Last Scene Of Struggling"

This heavy track contains another interesting snare pattern in the chorus. (0:26)

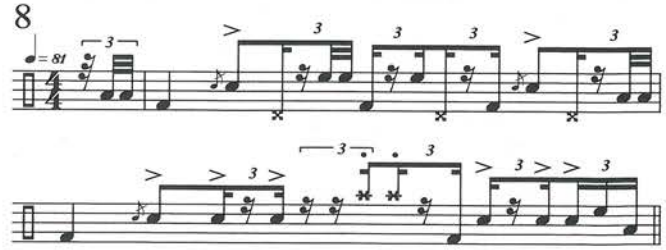
7



"Therapy"

Rich puts a unique spin on the half-time shuffle with this wonderfully sparse and syncopated groove from the song's chorus. (0:50)

8



You can contact Ed Breckenfeld through his Web site, www.edbreckenfeld.com.

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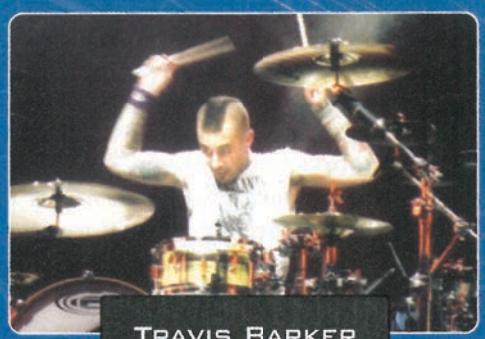
ZORO

AIRTO



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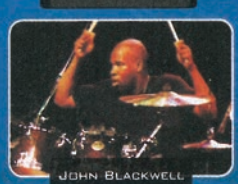

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Reading Basics

Part 1: Taking Your First Steps

by Kelly Paletta

This series serves as a gentle introduction to the world of reading drum notation. If you're just getting started, the good news is, it ain't rocket science! With a little effort you can figure this stuff out. With a little more effort and a lot of repetition, you can become a pretty good reader. *Anyone* can. Just take it slowly and don't get discouraged.

Despite what you may have been led to believe, learning to read music will not hamper your creativity, nor will it turn you into an emotionless robot. On the contrary, the ability to read opens many doors. You'll gain a deeper understanding of what you can already play, and you'll develop a method to remember and review what you've learned. Sharp reading skills might even help you land a gig in a recording studio, orchestra pit, or big band.

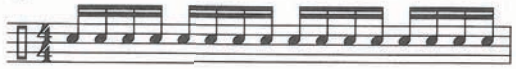
It All Starts With A Framework

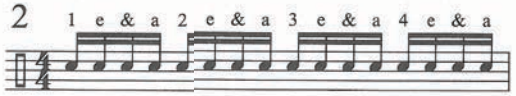
Just like the walls in your home have an underlying lattice of studs, rhythm in music is built on a framework of tiny bits of time strung together. For most pop songs, those tiny bits are 16th notes. Sixteenth notes are the "chugga-chugga-chugga-chugga" of the train engine, the "ticka-ticka-ticka-ticka" of a noisy valve on your neighbor's old car. Remember the drum solo from "Wipe Out"? Those are 16th notes. Larry Mullen Jr.'s big snare drum fills on "Pride (In The Name Of Love)"? Sixteenth notes there too. The hi-hat part on the intro to "Tom Sawyer"? Sixteenth notes!

As these examples illustrate, you might dance or clap along "on the beat," but the space between the beats is defined by (or *subdivided* into) 16th notes. In 4/4 time, the language of most pop songs, 16th notes are counted with a rhyme that goes like this: "ONE EE AND AH TWO EE AND AH THREE EE AND AH FOUR EE AND AH." The short-hand version is 1e&a 2e&a 3e&a 4e&a. For now, we'll call this the "1e&a song."

It's imperative that you get comfortable with counting 16th notes. Try to sing the 1e&a song along with the radio and with your favorite recordings. Soon you'll recognize the 16th-note subdivision as the underlying framework for much of the music that you hear.

Now let's translate the 1e&a song to the page. Here's what it looks like on paper.

1

When you count along, it becomes this:

2

Now you're already reading 16th notes! You didn't know it was going to be this easy, did you? Now let's look a little closer at the details.

Anatomy Of A Note

Each note is comprised of a few distinct parts that convey specific information. The dots are called note heads. The primary function of a note head is to indicate pitch by its position on the staff. In the case of drum music, the line or space on which the note head appears designates which drum you are to hit. For instance, a note appearing in the third space from the bottom of the staff usually indicates the snare drum.

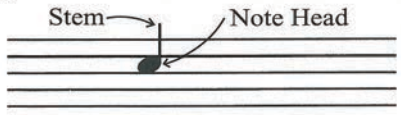
Additionally, in percussion notation, the note head shape or symbol may give further clues about which instrument to play. For example, cymbals are usually notated with an "x"-shaped note head. We'll learn later that note heads also convey some (but not all) of the information necessary to determine a note's duration.

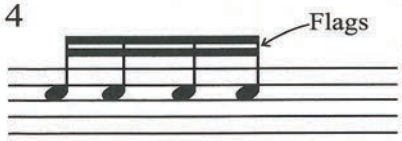
The vertical line extending upwards (or sometimes downwards) from the note head is called the stem. The stem is literally a flagpole. It connects the note head to its flags. Flags are the thick horizontal

Recording studio executive: "Son, you play very well. Tell me, can you read music?" Bright-eyed aspiring musician: "Not enough to hurt my playing!"

—Old musician's joke, often attributed to Louis Armstrong

lines at the top of the stems. Flags convey information about a note's duration. Refer to the following to identify the parts of a note.

3

Flags may bridge two or more stems. They may attach to the right or left side of the stem.

4

Sometimes flags are attached to only one stem.

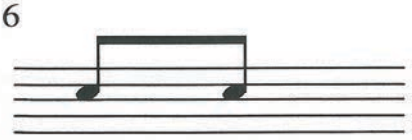
5

As shown in example 4, flags may connect to *either* side of the stem. Flags may also bridge two stems, in which case they are referred to as "beams." Two flags attached to a stem indicate a 16th note. Important: As we saw above, each 16th note occupies the space of only one syllable in the 1e&a song.

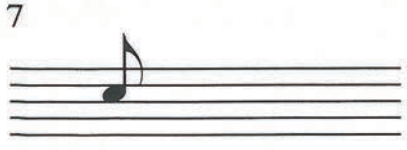
That's Well And Good For Trains, But What About Real Music?

Now that you're more familiar with the 16th note than you ever wanted to be, you begin to realize that, unless you intend to write a lot of songs about trains and bumblebees, straight 16th notes are somewhat limiting in terms of artistic expression. At this point you may wonder how other rhythmic values are indicated. The system is simple and logical.

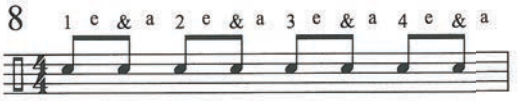
To notate music at half the relative speed of 16th notes, all you do is erase one flag. That's all there is to it! Notes with only one flag attached to their stems are called 8th notes (because there are eight of them in a measure of 4/4 time). Each 8th note occupies the space of two 16th notes. Eighth notes look like this:

6

Or this:

7

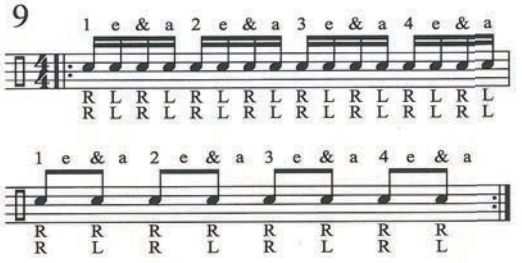


So how do 8th notes relate to the 1e&a song? As stated earlier, each 8th note occupies the space of two 16th notes, or two syllables in the 1e&a song. If we line the note stems up with every other syllable in the 1e&a song, we have:

8

To help put this new information into context, the guitar intro and nearly all of the drum fills in Guns N' Roses' "Sweet Child O' Mine" are 8th notes. Eighth notes are also the driving "thump thump thump thump" of Ringo's bass drum during his drum solo in the Beatles song "The End."

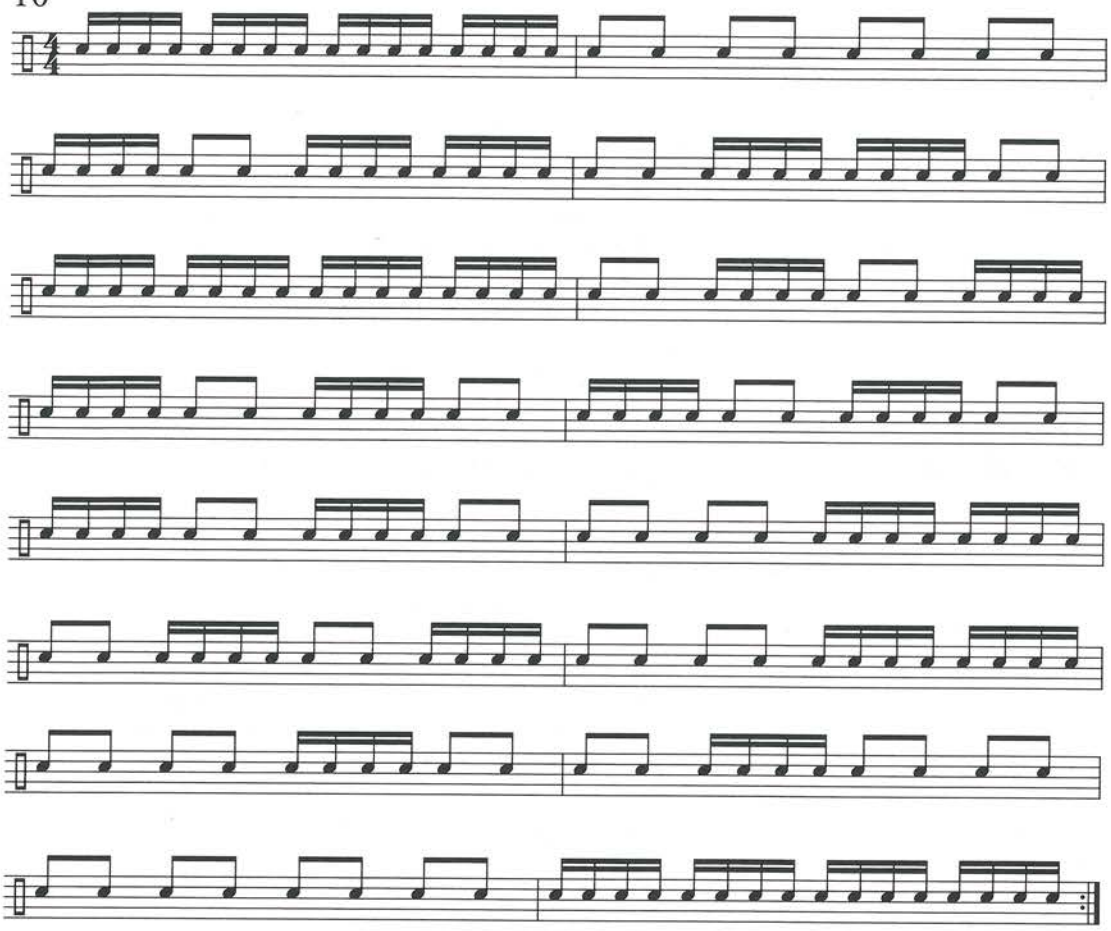
Learning to count 16th notes while playing 8th notes is critical. Practice the previous 8th-note exercise. Sing every syllable in the 1e&a song even though your hands are only playing every *other* syllable. Singing the 16th-note subdivision will help keep your playing rooted to the framework. Counting the 16th-note subdivisions eliminates the guesswork in timekeeping. It ensures that the notes you play are placed solidly in the pocket, not just loitering somewhere near the beat.

Having a hard time playing 8th notes while singing the 1e&a song? Here's an exercise that will help you get the hang of it.

9

Sing the 1e&a song throughout, and alternate between the two sticking patterns listed below the staff. At each end of the staff you see two dots and two vertical lines—a thin one and a thicker one. These are repeat signs, and that's exactly what you're going to do. Repeat this exercise until it feels comfortable.

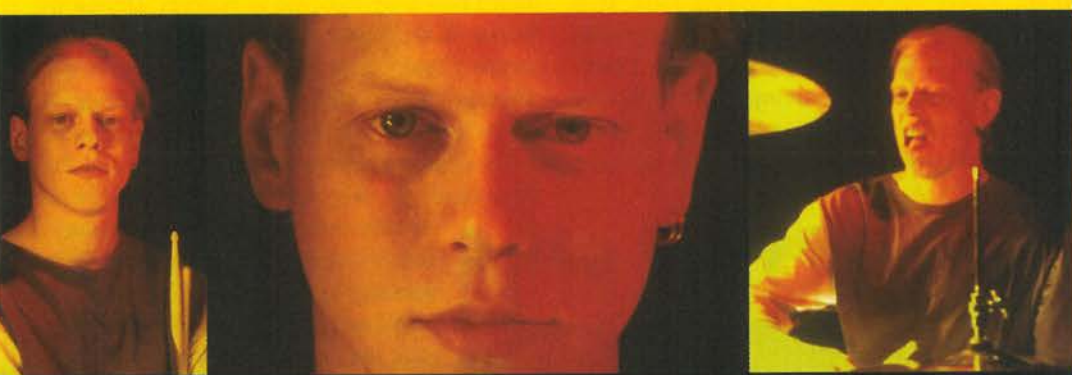
What Have You Learned, Dorothy?

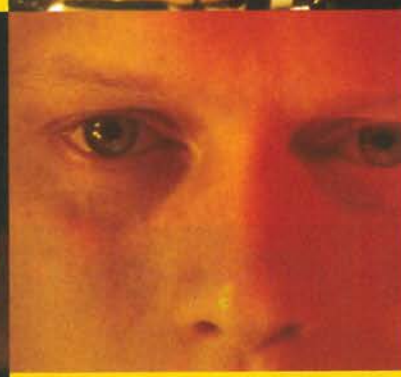
So there you have it. You now know and can read the rhythmic foundation to most pop songs, the 16th-note subdivision. You also know how to play and read another related note value—the 8th note. Along the way you picked up some information on a handy little device called the repeat sign. Not bad for a first effort!

Example 10 (on the next page) puts everything that you've learned into practice. Be sure to sing the 1e&a song throughout. After you're comfortable with playing this piece on snare drum, try orchestrating it around the drumset. And play it like you mean it!

Next month we'll cover more note values, and we'll check out rests as well. See you then.

DAVE LANGGUTH

NELLY FURTADO





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10x4 STAINLESS STEEL SNARE 14X5 10PLY MAPLE SNARE

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Street Drumming
A Firsthand Account

by Wyatt Green

The crowd swelled as I sent a flurry of 32nd notes across my buckets, pots, and pans. I was feeling good tonight—relaxed and fast. Bursts of light from tourists' cameras flashed through my half-closed eyes. If I closed them just a little more (and ignored the fact that I was sitting on a plastic bucket), I could almost imagine that I was Neil Peart playing his "YYZ" solo in an arena.

But it was much more important to keep my eyes open. To the right of the drunken college girls who were dancing in front of me, a homeless man had been weaving back and forth, and he was now a little too close to my tip pail for my liking. I shot the vagrant a warning look, then smiled and thanked the middle-aged woman who had just put a dollar into my pail. Then I half-turned my head in an attempt to deal with a young child who had taken to shaking my drum rack as I played. It was a typical night of street drumming.

On The Road

In July of 2003, I left the East Coast, where I'd worked for four years in a Washington, D.C. office job, and set off to explore the world of street drumming. Using a bizarre but eye-catching bucket-and-trashcan drumkit of my own design, I played in various street-performance hot spots around the country. These included D.C.'s Eastern Market, New Orleans' French Quarter, and California's Palm Springs, Venice Beach, and Santa Monica.

My daily schedule varied, depending on where I was performing. The presence of the largest crowds dictated what time of the day or night I played, and the generosity of the crowds determined how long I needed to perform. During the height of the tourist season in Santa Monica, a couple of hours in the evening was often sufficient, whereas I had to play for many hours during the day in Venice Beach in order to pay my expenses.

My approach was generally the same. I'd find the closest parking spot available, unload my buckets, trashcans, and other equipment, and set up in my chosen spot. After warming up my hands by playing rudiments on the ground, my shoe, or whatever was handy, I'd sit down at my drumkit, where curious bystanders were often waiting for me. As I worked my way through the various patterns I'd developed, more people would stop to listen, the crowd would grow, and (if things were going well) people would drop money into the plastic pail strategically placed in front of me. After I finished playing, I'd wait for the last stragglers to tip me, glare menacingly at the backs of those who didn't, rest for a couple minutes, and then repeat the process.

Lessons Learned

My playing evolved considerably during those four months. I quickly realized that the one crucial charac-

teristic that differentiates a street audience from one found in a more organized setting is transience. Although some people would be present from the beginning to the end of a performance, many would arrive in the middle, watch for a bit, and then leave before the end. That being the case, I quickly learned how important it is that every segment of the performance be equally interesting. I found that a dramatic piece that begins simply and grows in intensity and complexity is not as effective in earning tips as a cycle through a series of intricate and flashy patterns. In addition, I tried to tailor my playing to what the crowds seemed to like best: funky rhythms, flashes of speed, and the inclusion of a variety of sound sources.

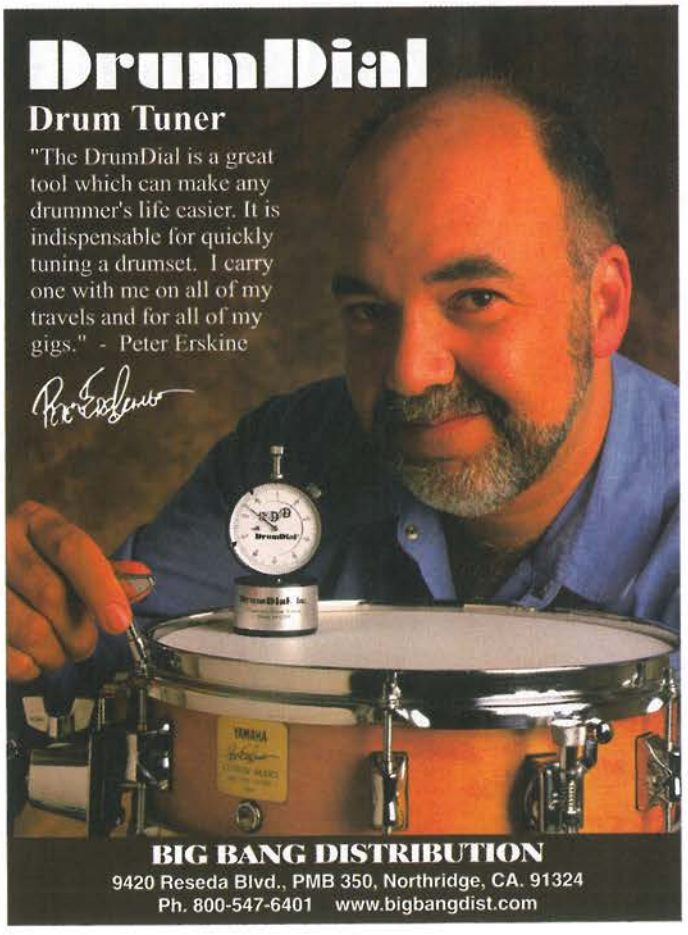
I also became acutely aware of how different your relationship with your audience is when you're playing on the street, where virtually any kind of distraction can and will arise. Since there is no stage or barrier of any kind separating you from them, people feel much freer to interact with you—for better or worse. On one occasion, a talented breakdancer surprised me by joining in, right in front of me. Of course, whatever the nature of the distraction may be, one must never take one's eyes off the tip pail. This lesson was driven home one day when a team of clever street children diverted my attention and escaped with my cash.

Although it's hard for me to believe that anyone wouldn't appreciate the subtle tones of buckets and trashcans, I did occasionally meet people who felt otherwise.

One of the first obstacles that I encountered in my initial attempts at street performing was an obvious (yet somehow overlooked) one: how to get my gear to my chosen location. Not surprisingly, convenient parking at my tourist attraction of choice was often hard to find. After a few exhausting attempts to carry my kit, I constructed a crude gurney out of some plywood and cheap wheels. After struggling over innumerable grates, high curbs, and rough cobblestone walkways, I vowed that any future street-performing adventures would include an improved transportation system.

Avoiding Problems

Perhaps one of the most important things that I picked up as a street musician was an approach for avoiding trouble. To begin with, one cannot play bucket drums just anywhere. Many cities have restrictions on the areas where you may perform, and some require street performers to purchase permits. Being caught without a permit will not instantly land you in the slammer. But it may cost you a fine, and it *will* get you off to a poor start with the local police—something an aspiring street musician can ill afford.



I found that the easiest way to get information on regulations when entering a new city was to talk with the local street performers who were already there. If they indicated that a permit was required, I'd call the local city hall to get information about the permit process. Although I can't speak for every city, I generally found it easy to comply with permit requirements. Santa Monica was the only city where I had to purchase a permit. It was cheap ($37) and hassle-free (one-day turnaround).

Although it's hard for me to believe that anyone wouldn't appreciate the subtle tones of buckets, pots, and trashcans, I did occasionally meet people who felt otherwise. Even when playing in a legally acceptable area and equipped with a permit, an aspiring bucket drummer's career can quickly be cut short by frequent complaints to the police from nearby businesses or residences. Consequently, I learned to give these places as much of a buffer as I could. I also varied my location as much as possible to avoid repeatedly irritating one particular business or resident.

Another lesson I learned quickly is that when selecting a performance location, an important factor to consider is the presence of other street performers. Chances are, if there is money to be made in a particular area, you won't be the only one out there. While a certain camaraderie is often found between performers, people whose livelihood depends on the success of their act rarely take kindly to another performer infringing on their territory. While you may not be breaching any city regulation, a blatant lack of consideration for another performer's act is likely to get you into trouble of an even worse sort.

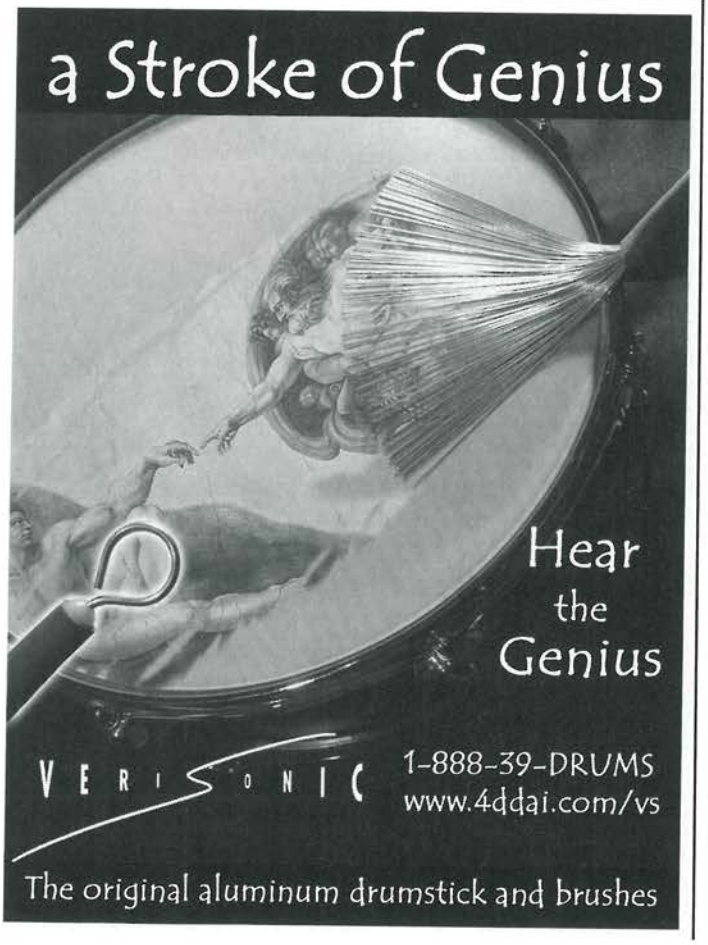
You Call This A Living?

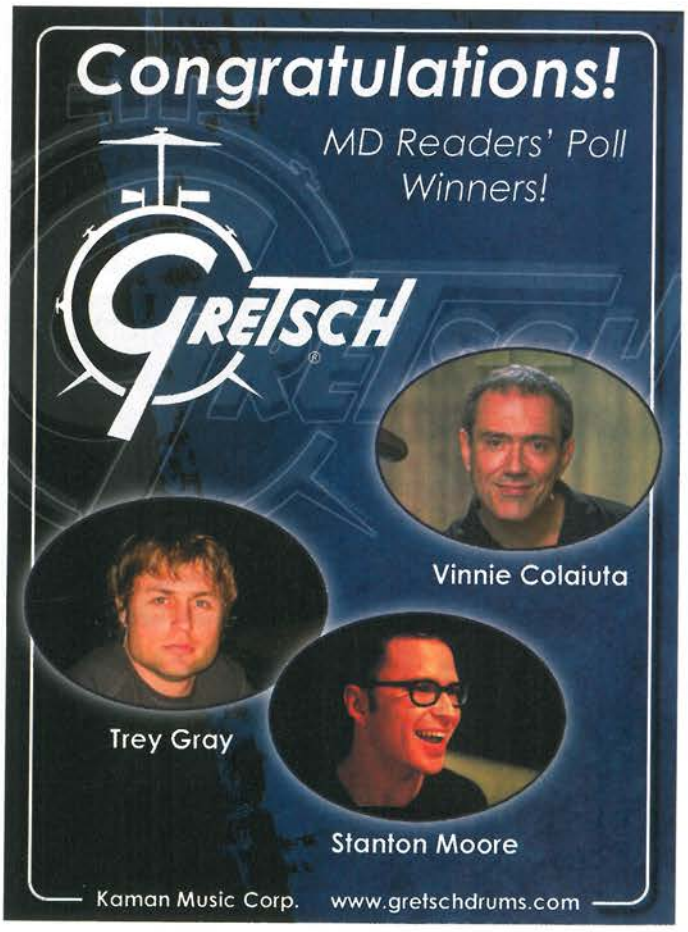
Besides the quality of your act, there are many other factors that will influence how much money you can make. Many of these are completely beyond your control. From my own experience, I know that it's possible to make a couple hundred dollars in several hours. Unfortunately, it's also possible to make just twenty-five bucks after playing all day. Beyond some general assumptions—like, the more tourists, the more money—things tend to be very unpredictable. I've played before large crowds who cheered me wildly upon completion, and then walked away. I've also had small crowds where nearly every person tipped generously. The location may be great—until you find yourself competing against a very successful act that draws everybody's attention. In Santa Monica, an act that involved several trained dogs and a cat never failed to attract huge crowds. Being upstaged by dogs is a humbling experience, and one that I soon took great pains to avoid.

Give It A Try

After four months and several cities, I returned home. Although it had been a worthwhile journey, I doubt that street drumming will become a career choice for me. Accordingly, my advice to prospective street drummers is: If the idea appeals to you, go for it! It can be a great adventure, and playing hours a day can do wonders for your chops. But don't do it for the money. There are far easier ways of making a living.

Oh, and if you should happen to see someone out there with a crazy bucket drumkit connected by PVC pipe, be sure to stick a buck or two in his pail.





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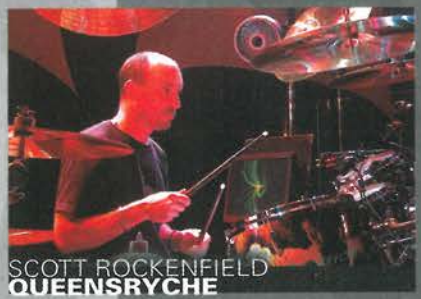

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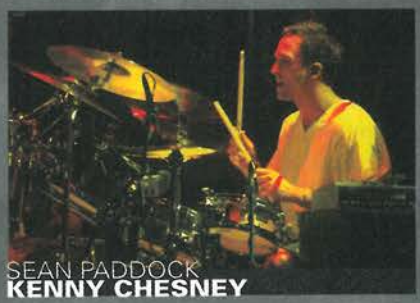

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Drummers Are Athletes

Warming Up, Stretching, And Balancing Your Mind And Body

Story by Jennie Hoeft
Photos by John Montgomery

Let's face it: Playing the drums is the most physically challenging of all musical pursuits. Athletes have regular regimens to help them warm up, stretch, and prepare their minds and bodies for competition. Drummers should do the same prior to practice sessions and performances.

In my dual careers as a drummer and a fitness specialist, I've learned a great deal about how well—or how poorly—the body can function, depending on how well prepared it is for the task at hand. With that in mind, here are some tips to help you prepare your body and your mind to function at their best.

The Warm-Up

A good warm-up routine gets the blood flowing, thus oxygenating every cell in the body and preparing the muscles for use. Here's a seven-minute warm-up routine that will help you to feel fully awake and ready to play.

1. To begin with, get into the proper mindset. Consciously tell your body that it's time to support your efforts to have a musical, creative, successful gig or practice session.
2. Take three big, deep breaths, feeling the sensation from the top of your head to your lower abdominals. (Your insides are warming up.)
3. March in place, with your arms moving, for thirty seconds.
4. While continuing to march, circle your shoulders forward four times, then backward four times. Repeat.
5. Pretend that you're jumping rope, but without leaving the ground. This involves flexing the knees and rotating the hands and wrists. Do this for one minute.
6. Do another minute of "rope-jumping," this time opening and closing your hands while you rotate your wrists.
7. Do ten to fifteen toe-touches. Keep your feet shoulder-width apart, and don't lock your knees. Touch the ground, then touch your waist, and then reach overhead. This wakes up your middle and lower back, and oxygenates the entire body. Caution: Do *not* "bounce" yourself down when touching the ground. Move in a controlled fashion to avoid suddenly straining your back.
8. Keeping the same stance, touch your right foot, then touch your waist, then reach as far as possible to your left. Repeat ten times, then switch sides. This strengthens your abdominal muscles while it warms up your torso and rotator muscles.
9. Taking one leg at a time, lift the knee to your chest for five seconds. Then switch legs. Repeat three times. This warms up the hamstrings, lower back, and butt. (See Figure 1.)
10. With your knees slightly bent and your feet a little wider apart than shoulder width, bend over from the hips and touch the floor with both hands (either the fingertips or the palms, depending on how limber you are). Relax your neck and let your head hang. (See Figure 2.) Hold this position for fifteen to forty-five seconds (or as long as it feels good), stretching the spine and connecting the hands and feet to the ground.

Squeeze your abdominal muscles, then slowly roll your body upright, one vertebra at a time. Your head should be the last thing up. Repeat this entire sequence three to nine times, depending on how warm your body is. You shouldn't be sweating, but almost.

Stretching

Following your warm-up, you should move into ten to twenty minutes of stretching. This will enhance your agility, your endurance, and your recovery after exertion. As we move through a stretch, we're taking the muscle fibers to their full range, reminding them of how much capacity they have to work with when "loaded" (adding weights or speed).

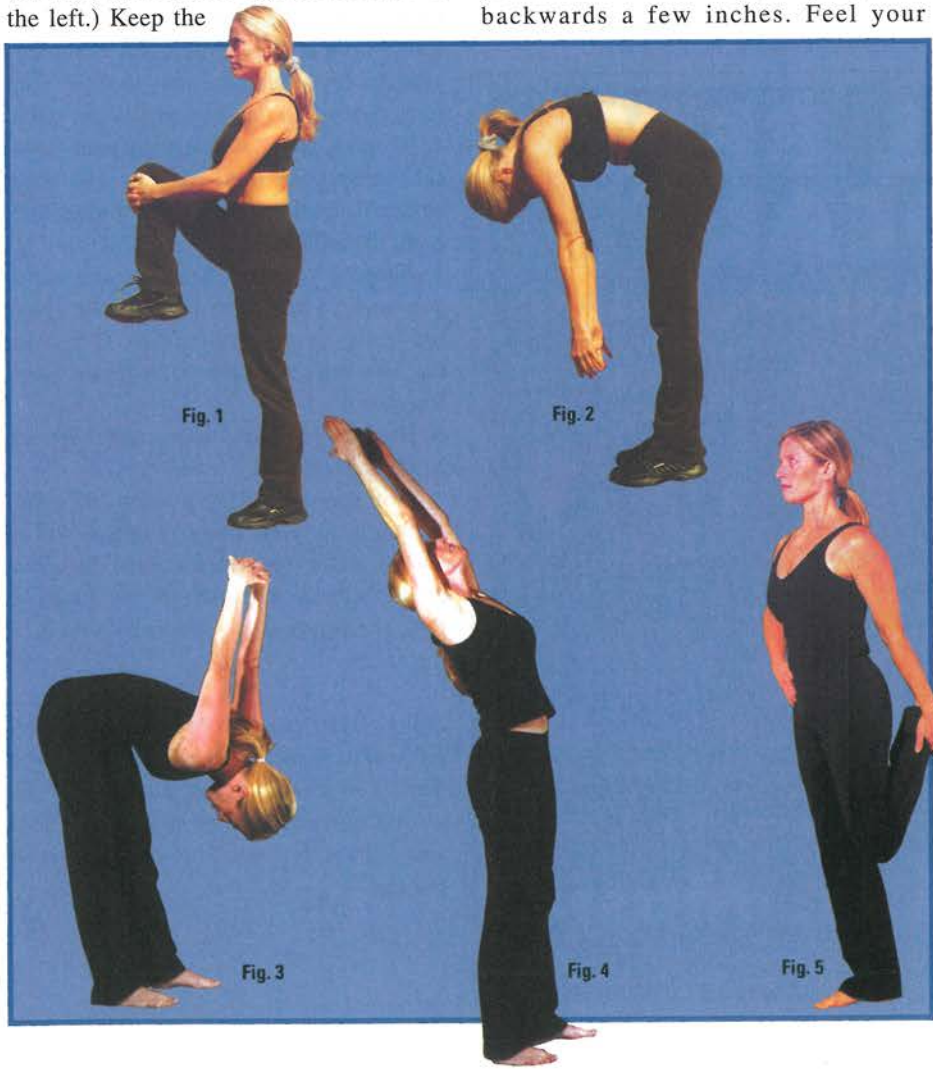
Professional athletes stretch before and after an event, maintaining and possibly improving the flexibility and elasticity of their muscles. Likewise, the following movements will be beneficial before and after you spend a few hours on a drumkit. I suggest starting and ending your day with them so that you're always prepared to play. And remember, stretching should *never* hurt. Be smart, and go slow.

Upper Body (Shoulders, Chest, Arms)

1. Hold your right arm across your chest. (Use your left hand just above the right elbow, to stretch your right arm further to the left.) Keep the arm straight and the shoulder low. Feel the right shoulder blade open. Hold for fifteen seconds, then repeat on the other side.
2. Clasp your hands behind your back (hold a towel between them if you can't reach), and open your chest, pulling your shoulders back. If you feel comfortable, bend at the waist, relax your neck, and stretch your arms forward, toward the floor. (See Figure 3.) Hold this position for fifteen to thirty seconds, then relax your arms and slowly roll up to a standing position, ending with a stretching reach upwards. (See Figure 4.)
3. Extend your right arm straight up, then bend it at the elbow so that your right palm is flat on your upper back, behind your head. Use your left hand to pull the right elbow to the left. Then switch sides.

Middle Body (Abdominals, Lower Back, Spine)

1. Stand with your feet together, your butt tight, and your arms overhead. Keeping your head in line with your spine, bend backwards a few inches. Feel your abdominals lengthening and opening. Breathe while you are holding the stretch.
2. Stand with your feet apart, knees bent slightly, and hands on your knees. Arch your lower back up and your head down and forward. Hold for ten seconds. Repeat three to five times.
3. Sit on the floor, balancing on your "sit bones." Clasp your hands around your knees and try not to let your feet touch the ground. Curl your tailbone under and round your back to the floor, one vertebrae at a time. Your head should be curled in so that your whole spine resembles a "C." Without using momentum (don't rock; use your abs), curl back up to the starting position. Your feet should never touch the floor.



Lower Body (Hamstrings, Quadriceps)

1. Sit on the floor with your feet in front of you, your legs straight, and your toes pointing toward the ceiling. Keep your butt bones on the floor, and walk your hands down your legs until you feel a lengthening of the spine and the backs of your legs. Hold for fifteen seconds. Repeat three times.
2. While standing, grab your right ankle with your right hand. (Brace yourself with your left hand on a wall if you need to.) Point your right knee toward the floor, and press your pelvis forward. You should feel a lengthening of the entire front of the leg. (See Figure 5.)

Balance The Mind And The Body

The body, the mind, and the spirit are connected. You can't improve one without affecting (and hopefully improving) the others. The body is balanced by feeding it a nutritional diet, and by challenging its strength and flexibility regularly. The spirit is nurtured and balanced by love: loving who you are and what you do, and sharing that love and caring for others. But the balancing of the mind is more difficult to describe.

Chinese medicine treats the body, mind, and spirit as one energetic force field. This field contains fourteen major meridians (or lines of electrical current), two of which are in charge of balancing the mind. If information can flow freely through these meridians, your mind is

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

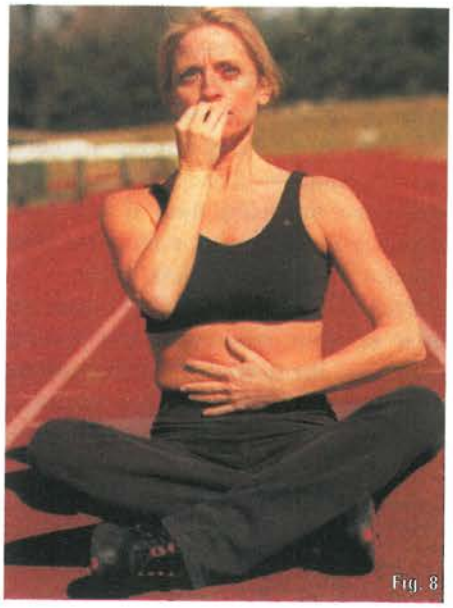


Fig. 8

better able to process signals from the body and send controlling messages in return.

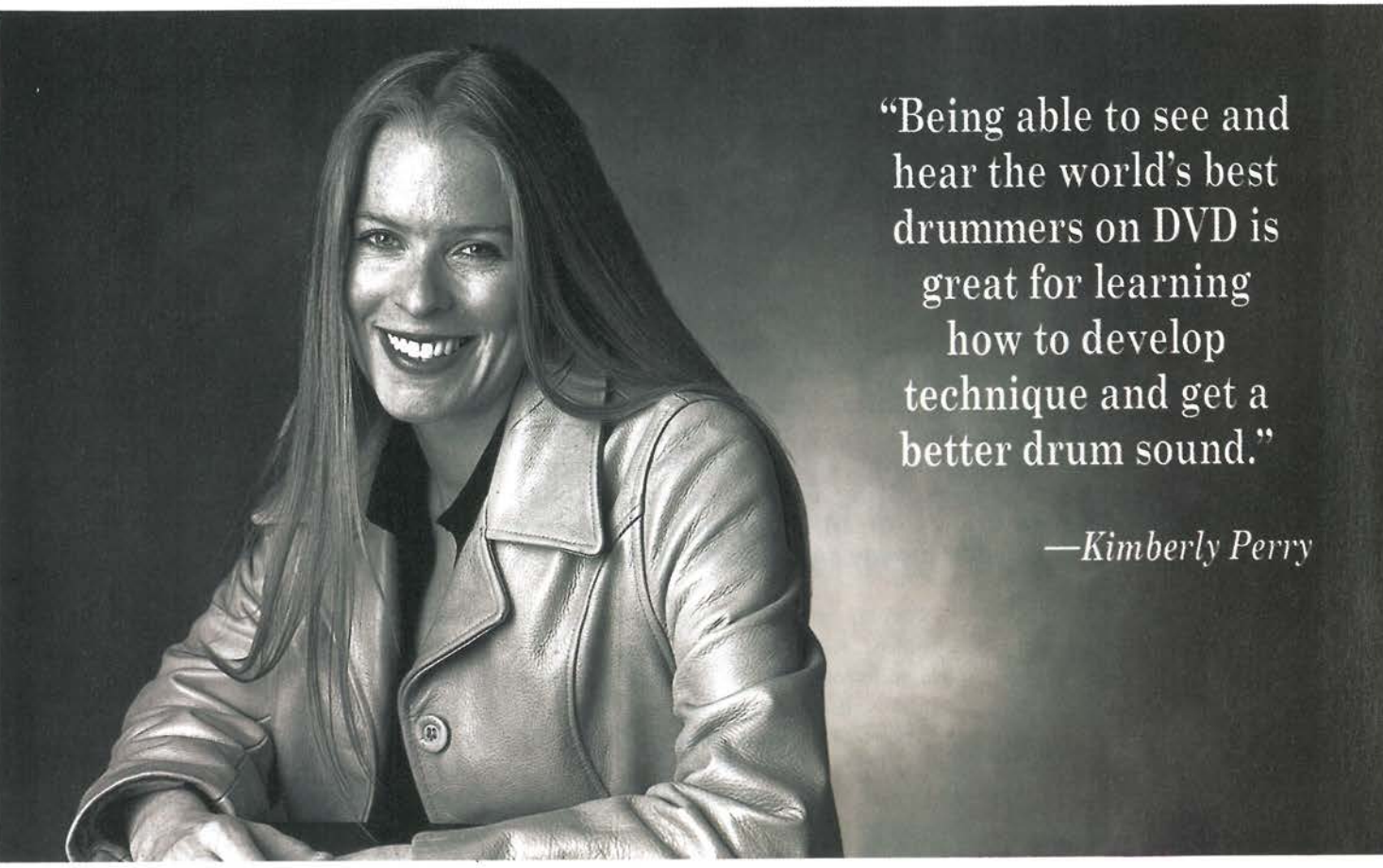
Our minds are in a constant state of operation, processing information. The more alert and clear we are—the more *balanced* we are—the more information we can receive and process.

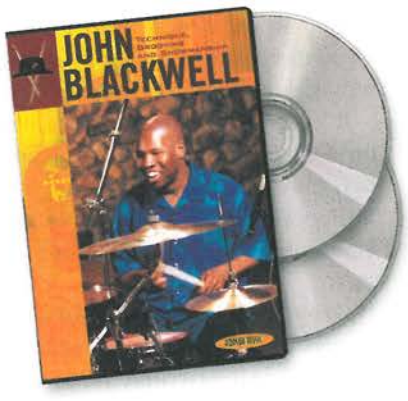
Have you noticed how much easier (and more fun) it is to perform when you feel good, or when your mind isn't busy with distracting ideas, problems, or stress? The exercise below channels energy through the two main meridians of the body, allowing you to relax, open up to the moment, and *balance*.

1. The exercise can be done sitting or standing, and with your eyes open or closed.
2. Place your left hand just above your navel, with the fingers spread.
3. Place your right hand on your chest, with the fingers touching your clavicle (collarbone). (See Figure 6.) Hold this position for fifteen seconds to three minutes, depending on your meditative state.
4. Keeping your left hand on your stomach, move your right hand to your chin. Hold this position gently for fifteen seconds. (See Figure 7.)
5. Keeping your left hand on your stomach, move your right hand to the space between your nose and mouth. Press gently and hold for fifteen seconds. (See Figure 8.)
6. Repeat the above three steps with the hands reversed.

You should notice a sense of quiet calmness as your body responds to the energy adjustment. Remember, the clearer the internal channels of communication, the better able you are to tune in to the music.

Jennie Hoeft is a veteran Nashville touring and session drummer. She is also a trained fitness and health specialist. We at MD *always recommend checking with your doctor before starting any exercise routine.*





"John Blackwell's 'Technique, Grooving & Showmanship' is a favorite of mine. The double DVD offers nearly four hours of grooves and technique suggestions— covering John's drumming influences and the importance of learning to groove first. He also slows down and breaks down his exercises and examples to help me understand and learn them better."

As a full-time drum student at The Collective in New York City, Kimberly Perry takes her drumming very seriously. Which is why, in her quest to go from student to pro, she's become a huge fan of drumming DVDs. "The DVD format provides speed and quality," Kimberly explains. "Whether I'm using my TV or my laptop, I can quickly navigate through information—making it easy to find and repeat specific material. Plus, the high-quality, digital audio and video of DVD gives me incredible insights on how to develop my playing technique and produce a better drum sound."

"New, hybrid, interactive DVD-ROM technologies offer even more features and advanced capabilities," Kimberly continues. "Like looping, tempo control, printable transcriptions and links to downloads on the Web. I've gotten hours of useful practice exercises and performance concepts from DVDs that have definitely helped me take my playing to a higher level."

At Hudson Music, every one of our DVDs is produced to inspire up-and-coming drummers like Kimberly to expand their drumming. "The founders of Hudson Music virtually invented drum videos and were the first to offer DVD," says Kimberly. "As long as Hudson continues to set new standards, it'll be easier for the next generation of drummers to raise our own."

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Sharing The Wealth

Revenue Sources And Group Percentages

by Bobby Borg

Once a band has been signed to a record label, it's important for them to understand the potential revenues that may come to them. It's even more important that there be a clear determination of how the money will be divided between the members. Why is this so important? In the words of Mick Jagger, "There's nothing like money to break up a band."

Revenue sources may include record advances, record royalties, video royalties, live performance monies, and merchandising revenues. But perhaps the most valuable of all revenue streams is music publishing royalties. This is the income created when your compositions are commercially exploited to the public.

Shares In A Song

Since drummers and percussionists are often not included in the band's songwriting process, it's especially important for them to understand how the income from a song may be divided between the members. A successful song can earn hundreds of thousands of dollars long after the band has parted ways. Knowing your rights can mean the difference between establishing a comfortable nest egg for your future and merely surviving from one gig to the next.

Knowing your rights can mean the difference between establishing a comfortable nest egg for your future and merely surviving from one gig to the next.

Under copyright law, when two or more people collaborate on writing a song, and each writer contributes music, lyrics, or both, the split is "pro rata" (an equal share of the composition), unless an agreement between the writers stipulates otherwise. A "lyrical" contribution is obviously the words written as part of a musical composition. What constitutes a "musical" contribution, however, is often the source of great confusion.

Neil Gillis, vice president of A&R and advertising at Warner Chappell Music, says that a musical contribution includes the melody, as well as any pre-existing riff or groove that becomes an integral hook to the song. Take the drum part to The Surfaris' "Wipe Out," for example, or the bass riff to The Beatles' "Come Together." Would these songs be the same if either part were excluded? Of course not. Neil Gillis states that he would never walk out of a writing session without there being a clear understanding among all the writers as to what percentage of each composition he owned. A simple written agreement will suffice.

It's a good idea to record writing sessions on a small recorder, and to keep copies of original lyric sheets—in case a dispute between writers ever materializes. Unfortunately, such disputes are not uncommon.

Groups often spend hours together in rehearsal—experimenting with arrangements, tempos, and instrumentation—and then spend more hours recording demos. In such cases, a certain percentage of their songs may initially be divided among all members, regardless of who writes what part. After all, is it really fair that the drummer gets zero interest in a song (and therefore zero compensation) after a long day's work just because he wasn't feeling as lyrically or melodically creative as his bandmembers on the day a song was conceived? Certainly not!

Percentages can be divided in a number of

ways in order to allot a larger share to the actual writers of the composition. For instance, one four-member group automatically allotted 12.5% of every song to each member in the band, for a total of 50%. The remaining 50% went to the member(s) who actually contributed music and/or lyrics. How these percentage arrangements are worked out is really up to each individual band. But it should be clearly delineated in a preliminary band membership agreement.

Often, when each member's unique performance shapes the band's signature sound, the band simply divides all of the compositions equally. For example, guitarist Stone Gossard and vocalist Eddie Vedder wrote most of Pearl Jam's songs, yet the band originally split the percentages of its compositions equally. However, as the group became more successful and Eddie Vedder came to be recognized as "the star"—essentially the only irreplaceable member of the group—the band wanted to keep him happy. So they allotted a larger percentage of each song to Vedder, and a correspondingly smaller percentage to each of the other members. However your arrangements are made, the division of shares in your songs must be communicated to the record company before the release of your record. As you'll see below, this is *extremely* important.

Revenues You May Earn

When you share in a percentage of the rights to songs, you are entitled to special monies from the record company for every record that is sold. These monies are called "mechanical royalties." They're licensing fees that the record company pays to you for using your songs on a record. Mechanical royalties are different from record royalties, and they're typically not used by the record company for recouping recording costs. As of 2004, the statutory mechanical license rate is 8.5 cents per composition per CD made and distributed. However, record companies typically negotiate a lower rate for new bands, at 75% of statutory rate per each record actually sold.

Mechanical royalties are one of the more immediate sources of income related to record sales. Statements are sent out to you either two or four times a year, depending on the record company and the terms of your contract.

In addition to mechanical royalties, you'll also receive royalties from public performances of your compositions on radio (assuming that these compositions are played regularly) and on television, including MTV and VH1. These are called "performance royalties." They're paid out after an artist joins (and registers their songs and percentage shares) with one of the major performing rights organizations: ASCAP (The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers), BMI (Broadcast Music Incorporated), and SESAC (formerly known as The Society of European Stage Authors And Composers).

Secondary publishing income may include "synchronization fees" for the use of your songs in film and television, and "print royalties" for the use of your songs in sheet music and music books. Again, these monies should be divided according to each member's share of a composition.

In cases where a publishing agreement has been signed with a music publishing company (which is a business that specializes in exploiting musical compositions in a variety of mediums and collecting royalties worldwide), a specified percentage of the income is designated between "the publisher" and "the writer." The publisher offers an advance, recoupable from future earnings, which again should be divided between the writers in proportion to their individual shares in a song.

Be sure to join us next time, when we discuss the potentially confounding topic of taxes. See you then.

Bobby Borg is a professional drummer and the author of The Musician's Handbook: A Practical Guide To Understanding The Music Business, *published by Billboard Books. For more information on Bobby, go to http://bobbyborg.com, or email him at bborg@earthlink.net.*

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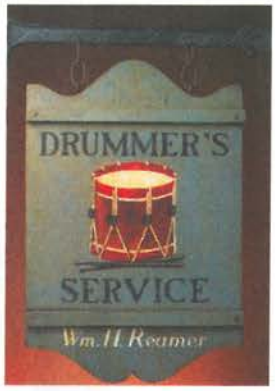
Bill Reamer
Classic Craftsman

by Mark Hoffman

Bill Reamer's customers march to the beat of a different drummer, but that's okay with him—so does he. After all, he made their drums in the first place. Reamer, along with his son Andrew, owns and operates Drummer's Service, a specialty drum manufacturer and restoration shop in East Earl Township, Pennsylvania.



The eighty-two-year-old craftsman—a former drummer, musician, and music teacher—makes bass drums, snare drums, and drumsticks for many of the world's orchestras, most of America's military bands, and select performing venues such as Disney World and Colonial Williamsburg. Reamer has been making drums since the nation's Bicentennial in 1976. That's when he acquired the shop from a Baltimore drum-maker, who had originally acquired it from a Long Island musician who (supposedly) taught the legendary Gene Krupa how to play the drums.

Making 'Em The Hard Way

To make a drum, Bill literally starts with pi: 3.1416. Using a complicated formula, he determines the optimum size for the drum, and then gets to work. "We don't make drums for rock 'n' rollers," he says. "They'd just beat them up too much. They don't need the subtle sound of our drums."

As he says this, Reamer points to a bass-drum-in-progress, destined for performances with a small orchestra. At the moment, it resembles a wooden belt secured by eighty C-clamps that are holding the glued wood together. "All told, it takes about three months to make a bass drum," says Reamer, reaching behind him for a loose-leaf binder jammed with scribbled-on pieces of paper. He leafs through the binder, looking for his drum-making notes. "I don't keep it up here anymore," he says, pointing to his head. "It's in this book somewhere."

Concert bass drums retailing for about $3,000 are the glamour end of Reamer's business. But he also makes drums for fife-and-drum and other types of ceremonial bands, as well as smaller concert snare drums.

Reamer starts from scratch in his cluttered and dusty three-room drum-making studio. He shows off a gas-fired piece of wood-bending equipment that has been making drums since the 1930s. "This is history," he says. "This machine made the drums that are played at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. It made the muffled drums that marched with Kennedy's funeral. It was given to me when I got the shop. I still use it."

On the vintage machine, a softened board is slowly bent to form a cylinder. Glue is applied to the joint where the ends meet, and the drum-in-progress is then ratcheted down with

Bill Reamer works on a rope-tension Spanish American War Drum. He'll use new leather "ears" to secure the rope, and will fit the drum with Civil War–era snares.

clamps to secure it. More wood is bent to form hoops to strengthen it. Later, calfskin imported from Ireland is stretched over the top and bottom of the cylinder to form the drumheads.

"When you look out my window here and see the cows, you probably think of steaks or ice cream," says Reamer. "I see drumheads. Irish calfskin is the best. It has just the right tension and tone, and it holds just the right amount of moisture to create the perfect pitch and sound. It's well worth the wait and the shipping charges." Bill admits that he will use plastic heads occasionally, when the situation demands greater durability or weather-resistance than calf can provide.

Although Bill uses the word "I" quite often, he constantly reminds people that he is only part of the business. His son Andrew, a professional musician with The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, offers technical assistance. Three retired gentlemen from a local church also pitch in. Local woodcrafters help with some of the woodworking, and a metalsmith helps fashion any necessary hardware, such as supports and braces.

At present, even with no advertising and with only limited marketing, Reamer has a backlog of six months or more, with orders streaming in daily via a catalog and a Web site. Of course, it helps that there's not much competition. "There is one guy in Connecticut," Bill says. "But he doesn't start from scratch like we do. He doesn't make the drumshells."

The 21x17 Grand Republic snare drum (top left) is the signature drum of Drummer's Service. It's emblazoned with a hand-painted variation of the United States Seal. The Tambour de Provençal (top right) is a recreation of a Napoleanic-era drum made for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. The 36" concert bass drum was custom-made for The Phildelphia Orchestra.

Sticks Too

Besides drums, Bill Reamer also makes custom drumsticks. While most drummers are content with commercially available sticks, many professionals would not be caught dead without a genuine, custom-designed, hand-tooled, and hand-signed pair of Reamer sticks. Each stick is individually made, according to the customer's wishes, including pitch, weight, type of wood, thickness, moisture content, and final finishing. Bill keeps thousands of hickory and persimmon dowels on hand, ready for crafting.

Reamer's sticks are fashioned on two different lathes to exacting weight specifications plus or minus two grams—about the weight of two raisins—and within $^{1}/_{100}$ of an inch in length. After he's done with them, he passes them to his son to test for perfect pitch. The approved sticks are sent back to Reamer to sign and then are forwarded to the lucky percussionist. They sell for about $25 per pair.

Recreating History

Some of Reamer's projects have literally been more than a century in the making. Besides his manufacturing work, he also restores drums. His projects have included drums used during the War of 1812, the French Revolution, and the Civil War, including a drum used at the battle of Gettysburg. That drum, made famous in several Civil War–era lithographs, sits in a corner of his workshop collecting new dust on top of the immortal dust from the epoch-changing battle 140 years ago. "I'm just waiting for final instructions," says Bill reverently. "It's safe here. I can't wait to start work on it."

Bill gestures at photographs of other restorations on the wall. "It's just me and several other guys in their seventies doing the work now," he says, his hand resting on the cherished Gettysburg drum. "There's no one else after us."

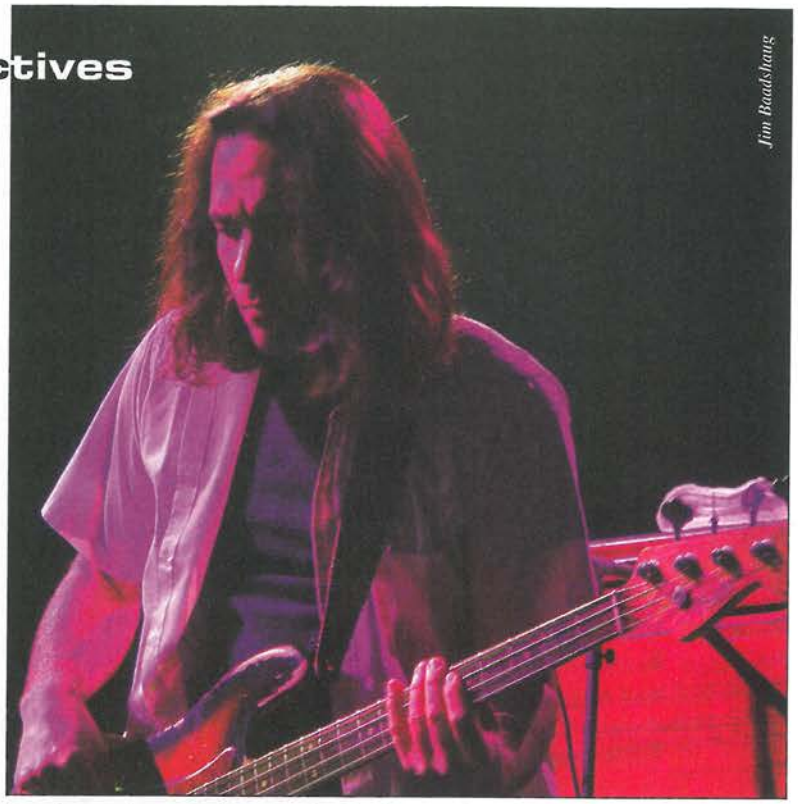
There is, of course, his son. But Andrew is more a musician than a builder's helper. Bill Reamer is the craftsman in the family. "I can't carry a tune," he says. "But I can carry a drum."

More information on Drummer's Service can be obtained at (717) 445-4635, or www.drummersservice.com.

Andy Hess

Low-Frequency Perspectives

by Billy Ward


Jim Bradshaw

This is the first of what I hope will be a series of interviews that I'll conduct with exceptional people (not drummers necessarily, and perhaps not even musicians) discussing concepts or approaches in their life that relate to our drumming world.

Andy Hess, while not being a household name, is an exceptional musician with an impressive range. He's also one of the most groovin' bass players on the planet. Andy's résumé over the past five years is impressive and reveals him to be a bassist who has been able to adapt and thrive with a broad range of artists.

Gigs
Gov't Mule
John Scofield
The Black Crowes
Joan Osborne

Andy has toured and recorded with Freedy Johnston. (Jim Keltner played drums with him on the album *Blue Days Black Nights.*) He then toured with Joan Osborne (with yours truly on drums) until moving on to tour with The Black Crowes. Upon the breakup of that band, Andy spun around and got the gig with jazz great John Scofield, touring with Sco for a year and recording the highly regarded disc *Up All Night.* Andy was then plucked from that gig to become a member of Gov't Mule, a band that many believe to be the future of true-blue jam-rock.

I can't possibly describe the overwhelmingly joyful experiences I've had playing with Andy while touring with Joan Osborne. But I'm hopeful that you'll experience some of those feelings as he speaks about his love of music. On Joan's bus we called Andy our "master deejay," because of the extraordinary collection of music that he always carried with him. Some of that record collection, as well as other perhaps more difficult items to possess, were covered in this interview as we ate Indian food and talked music.

"Being bold and stepping up involves taking a bit of a risk—and that's good. I think you have to take risks as a musician."

Billy: How did music start for you?

Andy: I think the biggest impact early on for me came from my dad living around the corner from a blues club in Oakland, California. It was called Keesee's Lounge, and they had live blues bands. Some big people played there too, like Lowell Fulson, who had the hit "Tramp."

I watched Fulson perform at that club for a week when I was fifteen. I would hold his guitar for him while he fixed his tie. I also saw other great bluesmen there, like John Lee Hooker. Those blues shuffles felt so good to me. I immersed myself in those records. I could see the

JOEY 1

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connection between blues and Jimi Hendrix and Cream, so it all came together for me.

Later in my teens, I played with some great local shuffle drummers, guys who wouldn't take their jackets off and who left the ashtray on the floor tom. I just played the groove. And from that blues foundation, it was a short hop to get into James Brown, funk, Stax, Duck Dunn, and Jerry Jemmott. I just wanted to be a part of the rhythm section and have it feel good.

Billy: What do you look for in a drummer?

Andy: I don't look for a certain thing per se, but I am interested in what kind of person a drummer is. There's also a simple chemistry that can happen, like the way you and I met. We just started playing and it felt great. Sometimes you can tell in the first few bars how it's going to go. But there are many layers. Sometimes it feels kind of weird at first, but later it turns out that there's something great to learn from that particular drummer.

Perfect together: Hess and Ward

With The Black Crowes, I came into a situation where the drummer, Steve Gorman, had been playing with the band for ten years. And he'd only been playing the drums for two years before that. He was totally self-taught. Steve played way back on the beat and with a real meat-and-potatoes approach. Sometimes after a fill, the band would actually resume at a slower tempo, yet somehow land *together*. But it felt great! This was a new approach for me.

Billy: Earlier you mentioned the fill "KaKaKaKaKAKAKAKA." [*Editors note: think John Bonham on "Whole Lotta Love."*]

Andy: Oh, yeah. As much as that fill is overplayed, if it's done with conviction, it's the best. Steve was the king of that fill. Like I said, sometimes there would be moments where the band's time would be weird after a fill, but it would be a "band time moment." I'd sometimes hit the downbeat after a fill and just wait to see where it was all going to land before continuing. I'd wait to see how the bar developed before joining in again.

Billy: I think drummers can do that in a smaller way, and there's nothing wrong with it. I'm always aware that the possibility of a time flex might be available. For instance, sometimes after a guitar solo, I'll listen very carefully to see if the band wants to go to a new tempo—or stay where it is. What other adjustments did you make with The Crowes?

Andy: Well, adjusting is not just about the music.

Billy: Whoa! So you had to wear certain pants?

Andy: Well, that wasn't as bad as it could have been. Jeans were okay. But there were other considerations. At times I would get a "tip." One time, the manager suggested that I move around a bit less on stage. You know, I don't really move that much anyway. I groove, but I usually stay in one place. But apparently I was a distraction from the singer at times.

Billy: What was it like going from The Black Crowes to John Scofield?

Andy: Well, when I got the call, I thought to myself, "I can't play jazz." But John simply asked me to come and jam. I had no expectations of getting the gig. I figured that I could at least say that I had once jammed with John Scofield.

At the audition it was just John, drummer Adam Deitch, and me. At that point Adam had already done a record with John and had been touring with him. I plugged in and John said, "Let's play some grooves." I just played what I thought was right for the vibe. It was a cool audition because it didn't involve learning anything. It was just about *playing*.

After listening to the tape of our playing together, John asked me to come back, and we jammed again. Two days later he offered me the gig. I was excited, because I always loved Scofield, especially his *Blue Matter* and *Loud Jazz* albums.

Billy: How would you describe Adam's playing?

Andy: I love it. Adam has a sincere love for all the great players. He's only twenty-seven years old and he's into the hip-hop thing, but he's also into the old-school funk stuff: The Meters, P-Funk, and James Brown. Adam's also into learning more about jazz.

Adam was musically fearless. He would happily "walk the plank" with John and go way out. There was definitely an intense thing between the two of them. I felt like I was the glue between them.

Billy: You're always the glue!

Andy: I think that's kind of my job as a bass player, to be a genuinely supportive in-between guy.

Billy: You were always the master deejay on Joan's tour bus. What are your "desert island" records?

Andy: Donny Hathaway's *Live* is definitely way up on the list. It has Willie Weeks on bass and Freddie White on drums. I always *have* to have that record with me. Another one would be B.B. King's *Live At The Regal*. I also love Otis Reading's *Live In Europe*, Al Green's *Gets Next To You*, and Bill Withers' *Live At Carnegie Hall*.

Lately I've fallen in love with Doyle Bramhall's album *Jellycream*. Charley Drayton plays drums on it. I love Charley. He's an incredible drummer to play with.

Billy: If you were cooking a stew out of your favorite drummers, who would be included?

Andy: Man, that's a hard question. It all boils down to how it feels and how the music is. But I would have to include Al Jackson and Ziggy Modeliste in the recipe.

Billy: Ziggy plays his hi-hat a bit louder than other drummers. That really changes the groove. With Ziggy, that hat carries the same weight as the snare. Who else?

Andy: Bernard Purdie. Everyone talks about him, but when you see him play, it's overwhelming.

Billy: It's his shadings.

Andy: Yeah, and it's what he doesn't play. Purdie's kick drum work is terrific too. His fills almost all sound the same, but they're

so great. Of course, he's got great time. And that Purdie shuffle!

Billy: Let's talk about your new gig with Gov't Mule. What's Matt Abts like to play with?

Andy: Matt is meat-and-potatoes too, but he's got plenty of chops. Sometimes he plays some of those Mitch Mitchell-ish long fills with kind of an open vibe—just great. But Matt is, yet again, a totally different drummer from all of the others I've played with. Plus the band is so much fun on stage.

Billy: It seems as if you've played in some loud bands.

Andy: The loudest band I've been in was The Black Crowes. They were *really* loud—and many times not in a good way. Even as rockin' as it was, I felt their music would've been better if it weren't so loud. Guitar players! It's always their fault.

Billy: What did you go through to adjust to such a loud band?

Andy: Being bold and stepping up involves taking a bit of a risk—and that's good. I think you *have* to take risks as a musician. It was especially hard because each Black Crowes gig was so huge. There we were in front of a big crowd, and the monitors were weird and the volume was so loud. It was difficult. But for the original members of the band, it seemed normal.

Billy: I don't want to talk about me here, but can you comment on working in Joan's band?

Andy: To me, each gig with Joan was special and unique. What I really loved about that band was that we didn't know each other beforehand, so it wasn't that thing where you're joining a band that already exists. That was refreshing. We could be ourselves. There was no precedent. We had no sound to live up to.

I love the way you and I played together. You'd be in my drummer's stew, man. You're part of the recipe, with all the things you do. We'd play Joan's "Spider Web" and you'd get all crazy. Then we'd play some rock tune and you'd lay it down. Then we'd turn around and play a great ballad.

Billy: One thing I always enjoy about your playing is that when the music is cooking and really boiling over, you hold the intensity and don't go off and make a selfish musical statement.

Andy: When something is feeling really good and it's cooking, how do you get it to go higher? You have to keep the focus.

Billy: But when the music gets to that point, it can be a real challenge to hold it there. Sometimes I'll just burst out.

Andy: Yeah! You know when you're exploding but *not* exploding? Charley Drayton is a master of that. The music will be cooking so hard, and he'll stay the course. It just keeps building and growing, until finally it explodes at just the right time. But you have to pick the right spots.

Billy: It's a hard choice to make sometimes. Some players let their egos get in the way and lose the focus.

Andy: I wonder why some musicians don't listen more carefully and pay more attention, because they're missing so much. Sometimes musicians play selfishly.

Billy: I wonder if it's that some players spend so much time in the practice room that they don't understand the social aspects of making music and how beautiful it can be for a group of musicians to play *together*.

Andy: That's a valid point. That's why I said one of the first things I look for in a drummer is what kind of person he or she is. When I meet someone who isn't too likable, no matter how "good" they're supposed to be, I don't want to play with them. Your personality is really reflected in your playing.

Editor's note: To see Hess and Ward in action, check out Billy's upcoming DVD, Big Time.

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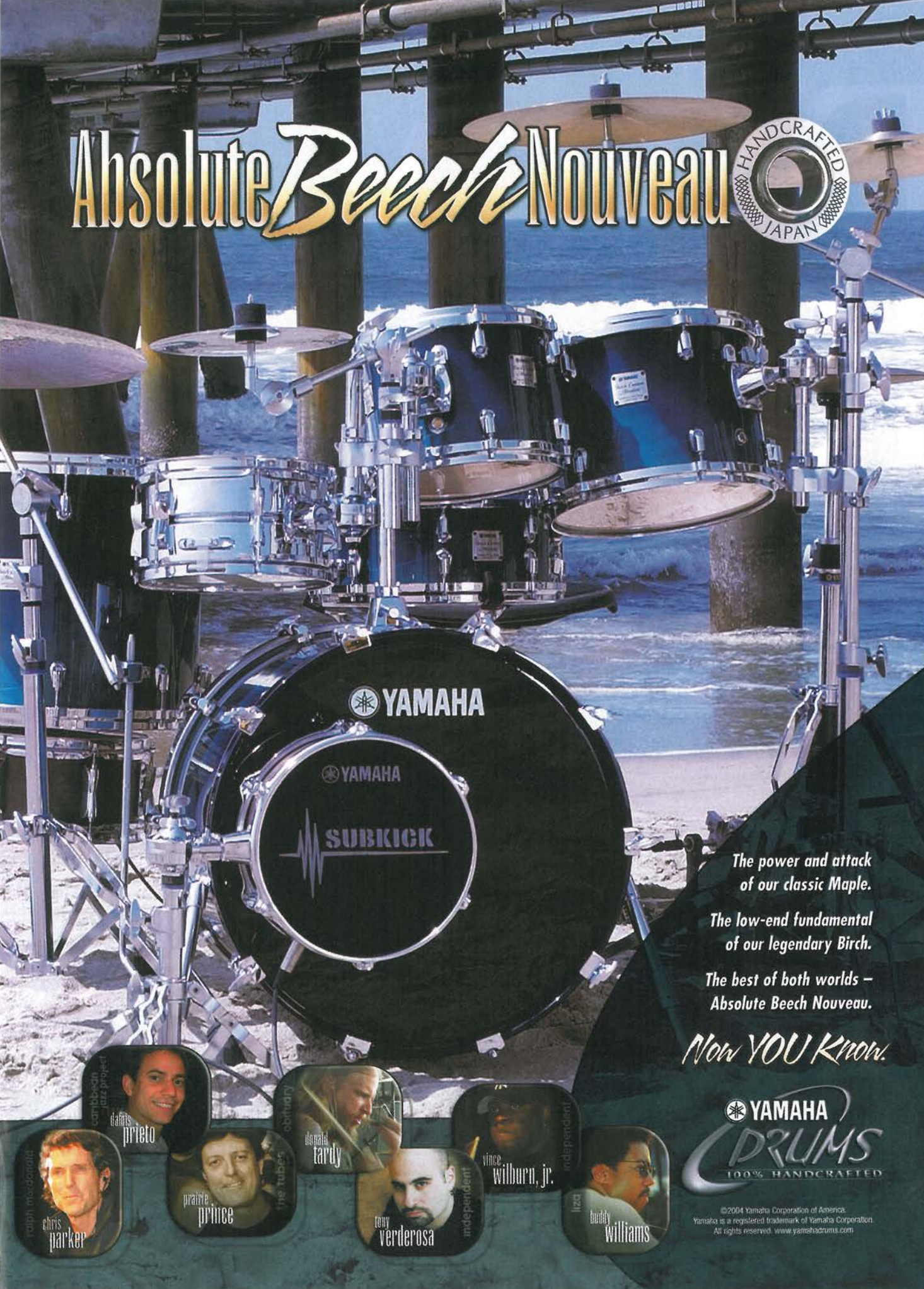
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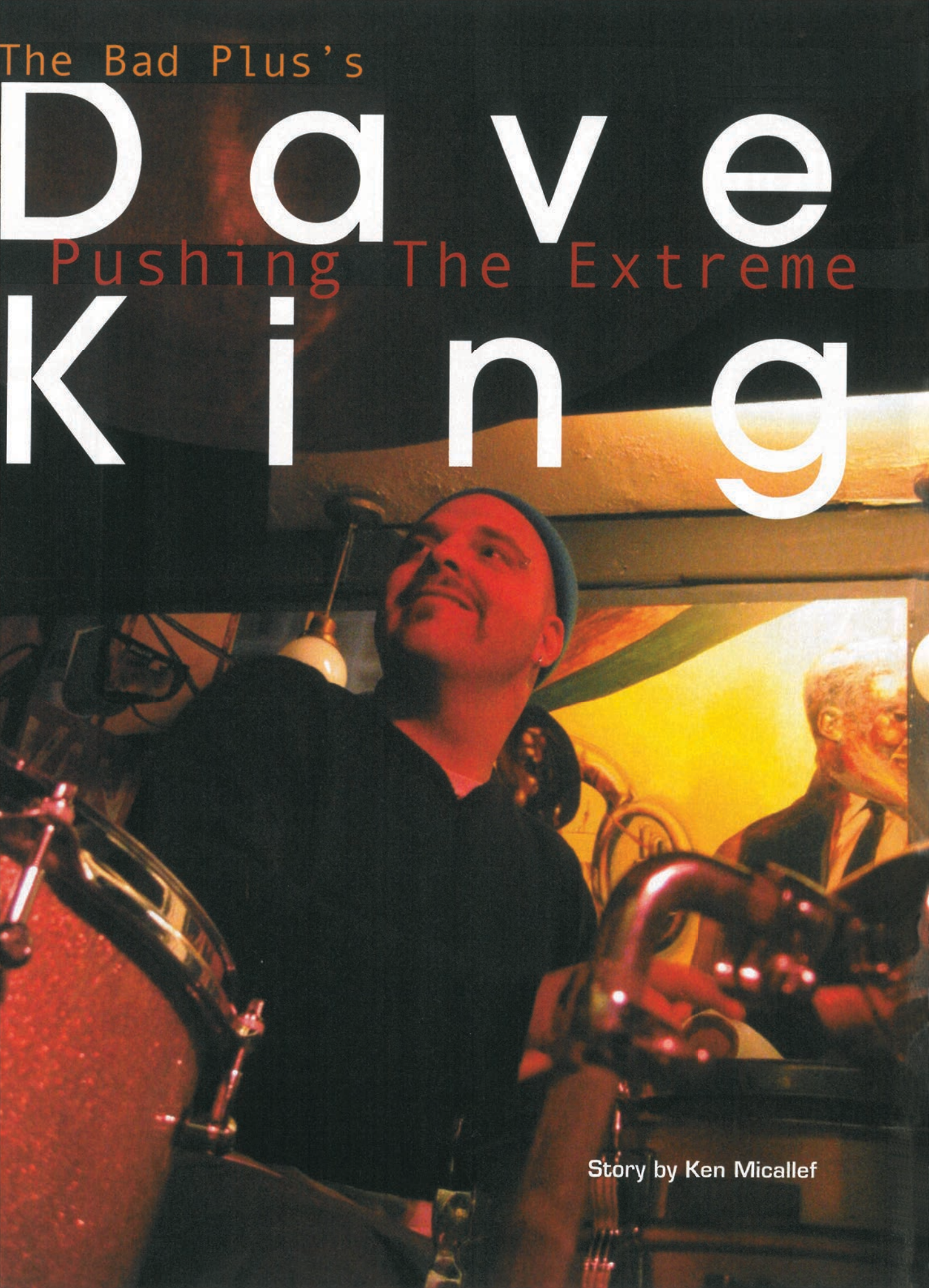
The Bad Plus's

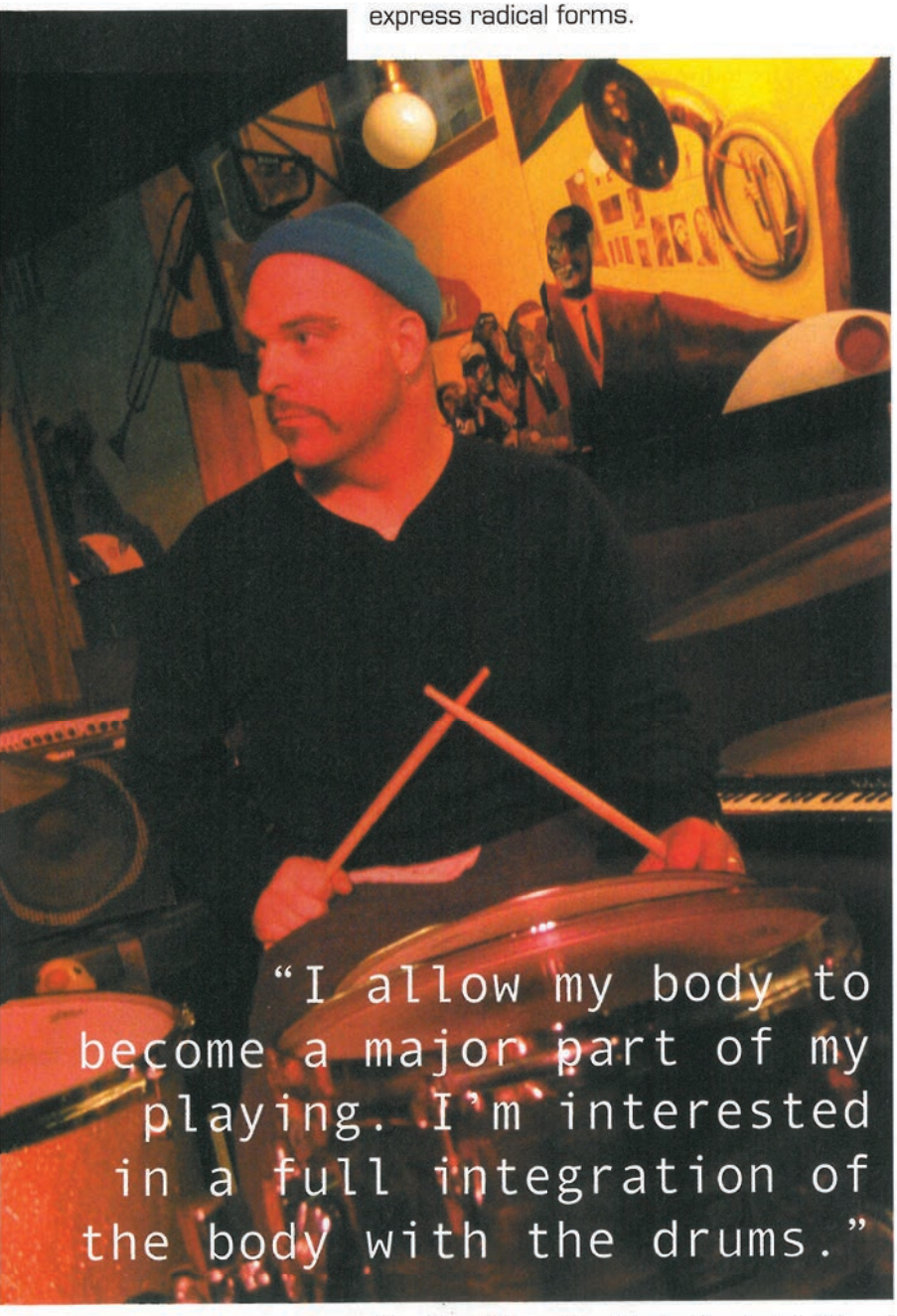
Dave King

Pushing The Extreme



Story by Ken Micallef

Drummers who have achieved great things seem to fall into a few different categories: The child phenom who follows all the correct academic paths to eventually bring his skills to bear on some revolutionary music; the rhythmic savant who can seemingly play anything yet never spends grueling hours in the practice room; the labor-intensive tech-head whose practice regimen involves years of solitary confinement; the natural; and the gifted drummer who applies himself equally to many styles and sounds while pushing himself to express radical forms.



Minneapolis local hero Dave King definitely falls into the last category. With his two main groups, The Bad Plus and Happy Apple, Dave is both drum terrorist and rhythmic theorist, applying seemingly bizarre methodologies to heretofore straight-ahead jazz. But is Dave King a jazz drummer? A metal drummer? Is he really a "drummer" at all, or instead a musique-concrete experimentalist busily deconstructing jazz and rock with a maddeningly avant-garde edge?

Frankly, Dave King's drumming can drive you insane—or send you to bliss. He sometimes battles the drums, compressing rolls with a demon's touch, walloping the heads with a sick fury, and exploring full-set cacophony over The Bad Plus's rousing acoustic journeys like a bull in a china shop. But at times King also plays with a sense of refinement and delicacy that rivals an orchestral percussionist. His snare drum touch can be graceful and delicate, his cymbal patter like butterflies dancing on your head.

On The Bad Plus debut *These Are The Vistas*, the trio (with pianist Ethan Iverson and bassist Reid Anderson) followed Dave's lead, tossing rock standards like Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" and Blondie's "Heart Of Glass" in a blender with jazz and avant-garde. King imitates the mad drum programming of Aphex Twin on the unnerving "Flim," and creates a volcano-like presence on his showboat vehicle, "Big Eater."

The trio's latest, *Give*, is even more extreme, individual, and extracurricular. The senses displayed on the new disc are even further stretched than on *Vistas*. Contorted and exasperated, the trio fulminates on an airplane-disaster version of Black Sabbath's "Iron Man," then rustles like leaves on Ornette Coleman's "Street Woman." This is not typical trio jazz, but nerve-frying music designed to withstand the apocalypse. We're talking dervish rhythms and dexterous melodies that will make you shout and scream. And it's a whole lot of fun.

Dave King somehow makes it all work, using drums, walkie-talkies, and toys to create a mystical, esoteric, and often annoying path to the heart of The Bad Plus. For the following interview, prepare for full-on head and heart immersion, and leave your preconceptions behind.

MD: You are an unusual drummer. You have great snare drum technique, you use French grip, and you have a very delicate touch when you want to use it. But the rest of the time, you play like you *hate* the drums. So are you a refined concert drummer, a free-jazz drummer, or a metal drummer?

Dave: [laughs] I like to think of myself as multi-dimensional, but with my own voice. I try not to be someone who just attempts different styles. I try to live within all my influences simultaneously and surround myself with musicians who can deal with schizophrenic scenarios that pop in and out of different styles very rapidly. That's how I listen to music. One of my concepts is that I don't see the walls between styles.

MD: Many drummers say that, but you actually do it. You play pop, jazz, some calypso, and then on "Iron Man" you're bashing. The drums are ready to collapse.

Dave: I'm not a music snob. I'm deeply into avant-garde music, but I also love jazz, rock, and hip-hop. I feel that John Bonham is just as important as Elvin Jones and Tony Williams. I really spend time dealing in these different scenarios.

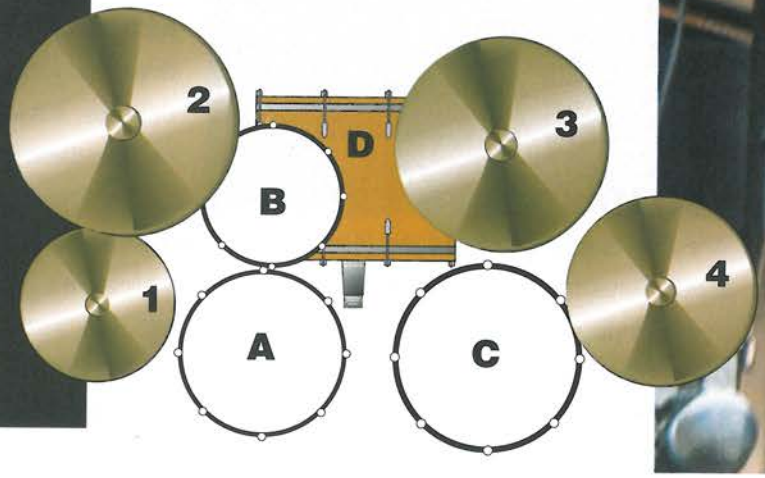
MD: That said, *Give* sounds more extreme than *These Are The Vistas*—maybe too extreme even for your broad audience.

King's Kit

Drums: Ellis Drums
A. 6x14 snare
B. 8x12 rack tom
C. 16x16 floor tom
D. 14x18 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 14" K Custom Special Dry hi-hats
2. 21" K Custom ride
3. 20" K Constantinople ride
4. 18" Re-Mix Breakbeat ride

Heads: Remo Ambassadors, Emperor on floor tom
Sticks: Vic Firth SD4 Combo model (hickory with wood tip)
Various: vintage toys, waterphone (by Richard Waters), and walkie-talkies



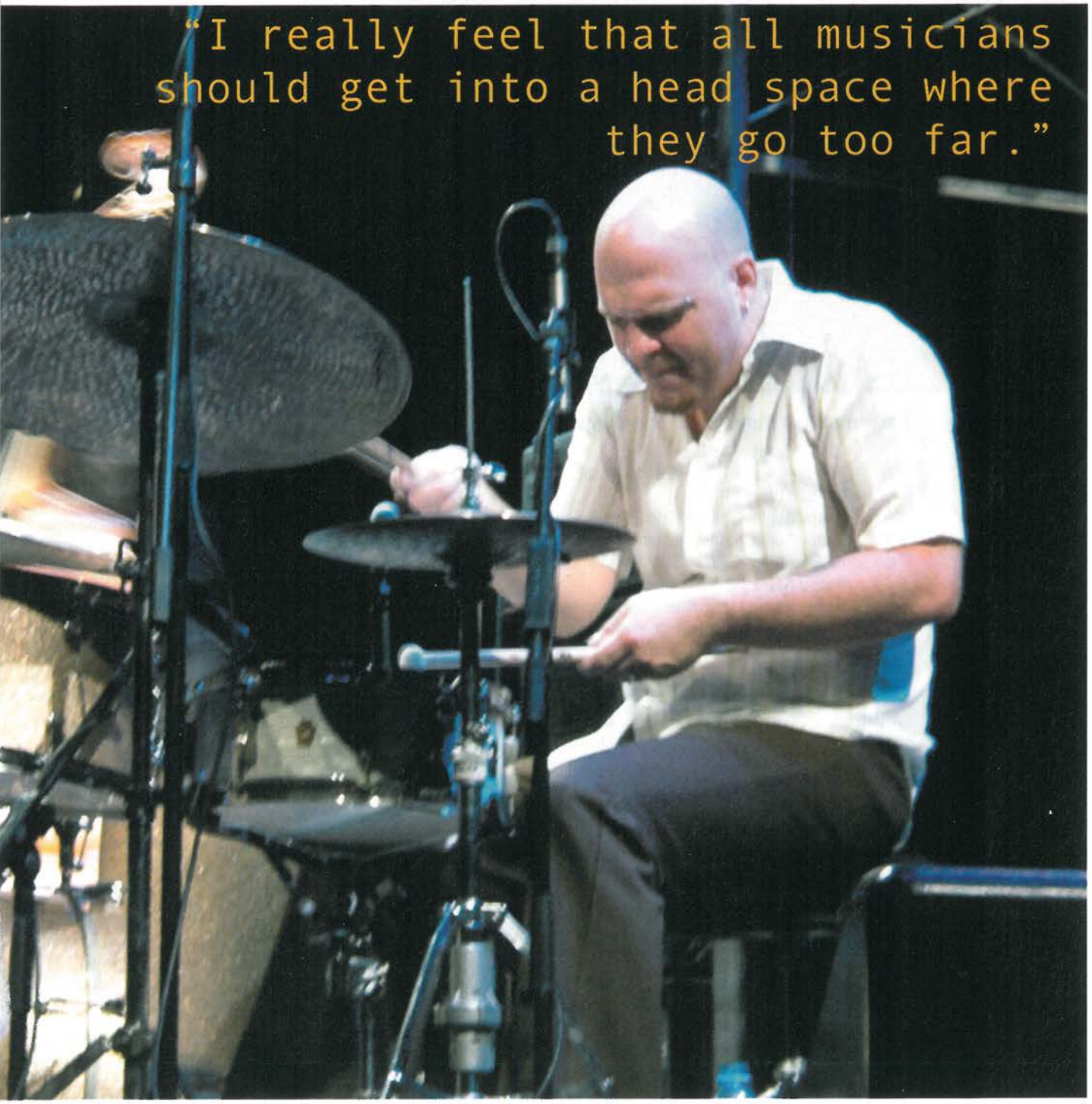
Dave: Each of us in the band has an intensity that rivals that of any rock musician. The pianist and I have a special relationship; we're very involved with each other. He is fearless. That's kept me from playing with too many other pianists, because I don't want to swallow anyone whole or be this one-dimensional lump that overtakes someone.

MD: You often play as if you're the lead instrument; you're loud and brash at times. Are you leading?

Dave: We volley that role. Improvised music has been such a leader-centric cave. You really associate a lot of the jazz greats as a singular person, not a band identity. But the thing with The Bad Plus and Happy Apple is that they're truly *bands*—and not just in decision-making and composing. What we do is equal-volume improvisation. There isn't one soloist at a time; there aren't any real drum solos. We don't trade. It's more about having a dialog, a volley of leader and supporter that can change from measure to measure.

MD: You are very fluid. You incorporate all of the kit most of the time. How did you develop that fluidity?

Dave: I am largely self-taught. I've had a few private lessons, but I've spent a lot of time working out ideas that have come from a purely musical standpoint. I play piano, I compose, and I think of the drum-



Vista Vision

Here are Dave King's best recordings:

Artist	Album
The Bad Plus	These Are The Vistas
The Bad Plus	Give
Happy Apple	Part Of The Solution Problem
Happy Apple	Body Popping, Moon Walking, Top Rocking
Happy Apple	Please Refrain From Fronting
Happy Apple	Youth Oriented
Happy Apple	The Peace Between Our Companies
Love Cars	I'm Friends With All Stars
Craig Taborn	Junk Magic

And some of his faves:

Artist	Album	Drummer
John Coltrane	Live At Birdland	Elvin Jones
John Coltrane	Transition	Elvin Jones
Keith Jarrett	Fort Yawuh	Paul Motian
Led Zeppelin	all	John Bonham
The Police	all	Stewart Copeland
Django Bates	Summer Fruits (And Unrest)	Martin France
Keith Richards	Talk Is Cheap	Steve Jordan, Charley Drayton
Bill Frisell	Trio Live	Joey Baron
Old & New Dreams	Playing	Ed Blackwell
Rush	Moving Pictures	Neil Peart
Squarepusher	Feed Me Weird Things	programmer
Dave Holland	Triplicate	Jack DeJohnette
Miles Davis	Miles Smiles	Tony Williams

For more on King, visit http://daveking.org or www.thebadplus.com.

set as an orchestra. I've tried to find the sonority of every piece of gear I deal with.

MD: Can you give an example of this?

Dave: Again, I've experimented with different ways of striking a drum; I'm very in the moment, so I allow my body to become a major part of the playing. I'm not concerned with posture or how high I raise my sticks all the time. I'm interested in a full integration of the body with the drums, the physical relationship with the instrument.

MD: But how did you get so comfortable on the kit?

Dave: There are some esoteric principles involved. There are times when I don't know how it's occurring. I'm so in it, and my body is so fully committed, that things happen. I allow pure moments to occur physically. I can say that I've worked on rudiments and independence, but I don't perform what I practice. I practice by playing with people.

MD: But to get to that point of freedom, of not thinking about it, there has to be some evolution of technique that led to it.

Dave: Most certainly, and I'm thinking about it, I'm not flopping around. But I can't identify some motor exercise that allowed me to move around fast or play underneath the floor tom. I don't spend six hours a day playing single-stroke rolls. I see the possibility of a sound and try to create it.

MD: But you didn't just sit down one day and play with the technique you have now.

Dave: Right, but it's difficult for me to identify when things started to take shape, because so much of it is in the performance. The musicians I play with propel me at some level to hear different rhythmic configurations. That's how I've picked up a lot of my stuff, by listening to strange saxophone rhythms as well as having a base technique. I *have* worked hard on rudiments.

MD: Did you play along with records?

Dave: Yes, especially Coltrane/Elvin waltzes. I would play in 3/4 for a long time and work on triplet patterns.

I'm not trying to be vague, but I can't fully understand it or take credit for it, other than to say all people are unique and individual. If you decide to let go and dive in, there are things that can happen on a mysterious level.

MD: But you must have the technique to express at this level. You play so delicately

at times, which belies the way you demolish the drums at other times.

Dave: Much of it has to do with playing the piano too. The way you touch the instrument is a unique thing. If you want me to tell you that I practiced paradiddle-diddles for a period of time, sure, I would sit at the TV and play the practice pad. But I'm not one of those guys who works everything out.

MD: I'm just curious about the process from A to B. Half of the time you're playing grooves, and the other half you're all over the drums.

Dave: I'm a by-ear player, although I can read music. It's osmosis; I surround myself with music that intrigues me, and it seeps through my pores.

I used to teach, and I would talk to my students about preparing a vessel for a journey. A boxer doesn't practice getting punched in the face. They get in shape and learn how to take a punch. I talk about getting certain basic scenarios together. I wouldn't write out riffs or transcribe other drummers' parts. I would say, "Approach it so that when we get into improvising, the music comes out of you in a pure way."

I would give my students intense independence workouts by applying Ted Reed's *Syncopation* to every limb in weird combinations and at various tempos and volume levels. Have one limb playing quietly, and the other limb really cranking. I'd have a student work out of *Stick Control*, but then take half the lesson to just play free and try different scenarios.

Think of a favorite tune and play it on the drums, chorus after chorus, and let stuff come out. See how far you can push yourself. I really feel that all musicians should get into a head space where they go too far. When you start thinking that way, you begin to understand where to push and where to pull back. I like to push things really far, experience those extremes, and then pick and choose what really works.

MD: When did that approach *not* work?

Dave: When someone just wanted to hear a straight jazz ride pattern on the cymbal. Of course, that scenario is something I've avoided. The idea of playing and creating to me is so sacred that it's always been difficult not to be fully invested emotionally in the music.

I also understand the process of playing under a leader, or playing something strict, or doing a studio session that requires a certain thing. Sometimes I would push to see what I could get away with, always thinking musically. I never purposely try to overshadow or play busy. I definitely push myself to experience every angle that can be played, both physically and mentally.

MD: So you were a piano player first?

Dave: Yes. I started on piano when I was five, began drums when I was ten, and then played drums in high school band. From the start, I wanted to do my own thing. I was a challenge for the band teacher. I was eventually removed from band in the tenth grade.

MD: Why?

Dave: I was writing my own parts to the pieces. I would do flourishes, play the stands, or play the bass drum and snare drum parts at the same time. I just wanted to create something more progressive and fun and take more risks. After I was removed from school band, I played in a few jazz ensembles at McPhail School of the Arts in Minneapolis, but they removed me from those as well.

MD: What happened?

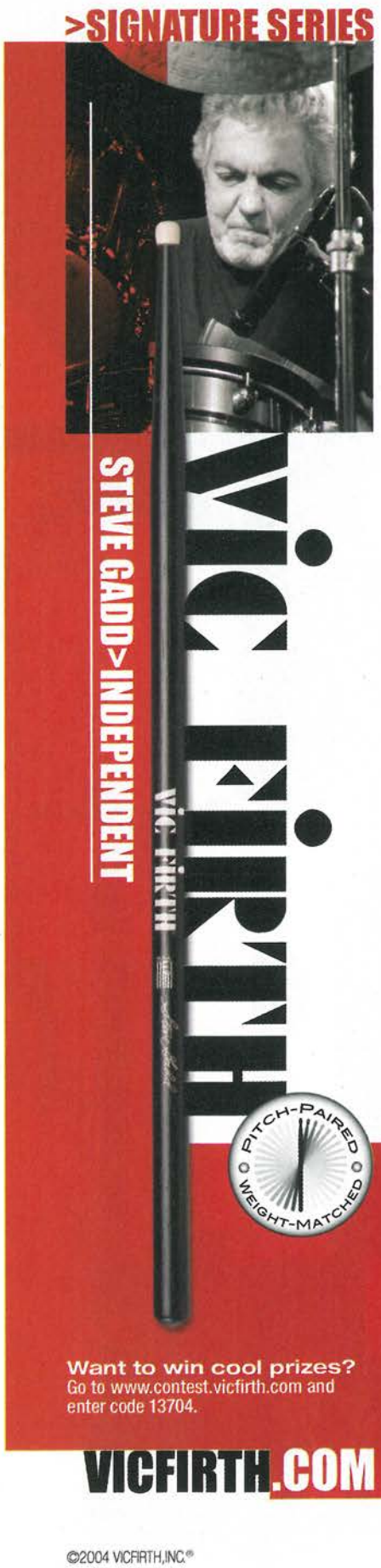
Dave: I wanted to implement my own voice. In the academics of improvised music, that's a very touchy subject. How do you teach jazz? I don't think anyone has figured that out. I wanted to see what I could do. I didn't want to learn to play like Philly Joe Jones. I never wanted to learn how to play like somebody else. I just want to play. That doesn't mean I don't respect Philly Joe Jones. I love him.

MD: So who did you emulate?

Dave: I wanted to be attached to the music that was exciting me. Elvin Jones was a big deal for me at first. I loved Max Roach and Kenny Clarke for their ride cymbal approach. The modal '60s progressive post-bop era is what hit me.

MD: So you must have liked Sunny Murray and Rashied Ali.

Dave: Rashied Ali for sure. Sunny Murray, Dennis Charles, and Milford Graves too. Elvin with Coltrane and Tony with Miles were really combining those progressive ideas and polyrhythms with tremendous technique and command over touch and dynamics. And I love the "presence" of Tony Williams dynamically. He wasn't just keeping time, he was in the mix and creating the flow for the whole group. That's my role. I like directing the flow, whether



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it's a control mechanism or not. It's a position I enjoy. It's like being the catcher on a baseball team.

MD: Did you play gigs in Minneapolis to help get your drumming together?

Dave: Absolutely. I also lived in LA for five years, playing in studios and experimenting. I didn't lose gigs, but I began to understand more about where I fit.

Minneapolis is an incredible music city. Clubs were open to all forms of music, and that's where I worked out tons of stuff. In working it out in public, I'm sure I put some people through some pain. I'm not claiming to be a fully formed artist, and I don't ever want to be.

MD: So what did you practice?

Dave: Sometimes I would identify concepts, like ghost-note triplet concepts that Elvin Jones would use. I'd mess around with combinations. I would practice different brush techniques, just using my ears to inspire the sounds I came up with. I built stamina on the ride cymbal by working on uptempo triplets. I would practice with the lights off, just because I wanted zero visual distraction. That's a different vibe from just closing your eyes. I couldn't see the drums half the time on gigs, so maybe that aided me in getting around the drumset. Or I would practice only the ride cymbal, or I'd remove all of the cymbals from my kit and make the music happen with just the drums. I wanted to test the boundaries.

MD: It looks like you use a lot of finger control.

Dave: Yeah. I did a lot of *Stick Control*–type work. I'm not heavily into Moeller or extended techniques. Again, it's been an organic approach for me. Earlier you mentioned "French grip," which is a thumbs-up finger approach. But I don't really do that. There was a period where I focused on my fingers. I've developed techniques so I can play five, seven, and nine strokes with one hand, and it's not the normal Moeller thing. I came up with my own approach. I spent a lot of time timing the tension and release of multiple-note groupings.

MD: Even though you're talking some technique here, you're a bit elusive about it. Some drummers, like Jack DeJohnette for instance, can be very hard to pin down.

Dave: I feel a kinship with him. He's into a lot of mysticism and esoteric stuff. And he plays that way. Like any great painter, when you ask them to define their method, often it can't be done. Jack is someone who pulls off stuff that shouldn't be possible. Honestly, when you're dealing with people who are putting their life's work into in-the-moment music, oftentimes the fabric of it is unexplainable.

MD: You play some toys along with your usual kit.

Dave: I do, and I use unorthodox drum tunings. One of my concepts is that part of the drumset is tuned like traditional jazz—a high-sounding rack tom and a warm-toned snare drum. But my floor tom is a canon, a drum that belongs in a heavy metal setup. It's a 16x16 with Emperor heads tuned so loosely that the heads are just hanging on. So you have a high tom from the jazz era, a cavernous "black hole" floor tom, and a kick drum that is tuned in between, not muffled and not too high or low. I start to think differently with those sounds. The floor tom becomes my "weapon" kick drum when I need it.

MD: Sometimes you play an upside-down doumbek with some kind of hanging rods.

Dave: That's a vintage instrument called a waterphone made by Richard Waters. I got it from Mick Fleetwood. When I lived in LA, Mick was auctioning off some of his instruments, and a friend who worked in his studio let me look through his stuff. He sold it to me for very little money. And it's a rare instrument. Geesh, I hope Mick doesn't read this and want it back.

MD: And you use walkie-talkies?

Dave: I've been messing around with them. They feed back if you hold them a certain way. The feedback makes these high-pitched sounds, and I can even get tones out of them. And I'll use the antennas like drumsticks; I play the drums with them as they're feeding back. Maybe I'll have signature series walkie-talkies one day.

MD: What other toys do you use?

Dave: I carry Fisher-Price Happy Apples, which are what I base my other group on, Happy Apple. These are plastic red toy apples that make beautiful jingling sounds. So instead of buying the more traditional LP bell toys, I go for actual toys.

MD: And you play Ellis Drums.

Dave: Ellis Drums are from St. Paul, and they're made by Tim Ellis. I like the fact that every drummer out there doesn't have them. The drums have totally unique lugs

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and are made with Keller shells. I like that these guys just started making drums in their basement. It's a good-sounding kit that isn't mass-produced.

MD: Let's talk about some of the songs you play with The Bad Plus. On *Give*, there are tracks such as "We Test Our Powers Of Observation" where you play as aggressively as '70s-era Billy Cobham or some speed-metal drummer.

Dave: It certainly is frenetic. I'm emulating electronic music on "Test Our Powers." It's like drum 'n' bass music.

MD: "Flim" is obviously approximating that whirring snare drum roll sound that someone like Aphex Twin would program. Drum 'n' bass guys in general sound more like a machine when playing that rhythm, but your sound is more flesh and blood.

Dave: When I approach something like "Flim," which is inspired by machines, it's a challenge to make it a hybrid concept. Take some of the hardcore breakbeat elements, like fast press rolls or some odd rhythmic element, and feed them through the human condition. I experiment, putting cymbals on the snare drum to make it sound metallic. I always throw things on top of the drums. I use African goat nails on the snare drum to get more of a parade sound.

MD: "Test Our Powers" and "Velouria" are intense. How do you play with that intensity every night?

Dave: It comes out of a joy of pushing myself. That's why the new record is called *Give*. We really are trying to give it our all every time out.

MD: Every musician loves what he or she does, but how do you play in that very physical way every night?

Dave: I would argue that a lot of musicians *don't* love what they're playing. Many times they're playing music that they might not be 100% attached to. Or the leader might be making decisions for them. I've tried to avoid that scenario my entire life. That way I've been able to invest an extra level of myself. You get into a Zen-like mindset of, "This is it. These are the last notes I'm ever going to play." If you're able to get into that mindset, then you can really take the music to far places.

MD: "Big Eater" is one of your showcase tracks. On that tune are you playing around certain markers, or are you playing a specific part?

Dave: I'm improvising. It's a complicated piece. It's got some shifting time movements. I approach odd meters like I'm playing in straight time. I like it to be flowing and feel really good. Nothing is more unmusical than when people are approaching complexity for the sake of complexity. "Big Eater" is fun because I get to blow over the ostinato at the end, which is in seven, but I'm playing all of the hits on the offbeats.

MD: "Guilty" sounds like you're massaging the drums.

Dave: I play the drums on that tune with my bare hands to get a warmer sound. On the first half of the song, I'm playing with a stick in my left hand and nothing in my right. Then I have a small piece of metal that I drag over the rims now and again. It sounds like a brush, but it's my hand. And I'm letting the bass drum really ring out, pulling the beater off the head.

MD: I hate to say it, but The Bad Plus version of Blondie's "Heart Of Glass" is like a train wreck.

Dave: That's most certainly where that tune goes. Your descriptions are cinematic, and often that's how I try to perform. And I compose that way, too. There are stories that accompany my songs. Our liner notes describe the songs in visual terms. Like "Layin' A Strip" is about using a metaphor from '70s trucking culture, like convoys, but having it be a movement of human souls for the higher good of humanity and a deeper understanding of yourself. That's why that song has a road element to it, an anthem for keeping it real on the positive tip.

Overall, I'm a big fan of combining abstract elements with very grounded ones. With a painter like Gerhard Richter, for example, from piece to piece he is dealing with many different schools, and he's a bad cat at all of them. It's like having an abstract painter like Jackson Pollock and a realist like Chuck Close dealing with each other. You see photo realism, color abstraction, blurred forms, everything, but all with the same tenacity and dedication. *That's* what I'm interested in, being in the moment but still able to pull back and have a technical agenda. I want to have all of these things for the sole purpose of communicating and inspiring something in myself and in others.

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Let There Be Drums!

Top-15 Drum Performances Of The 1960s

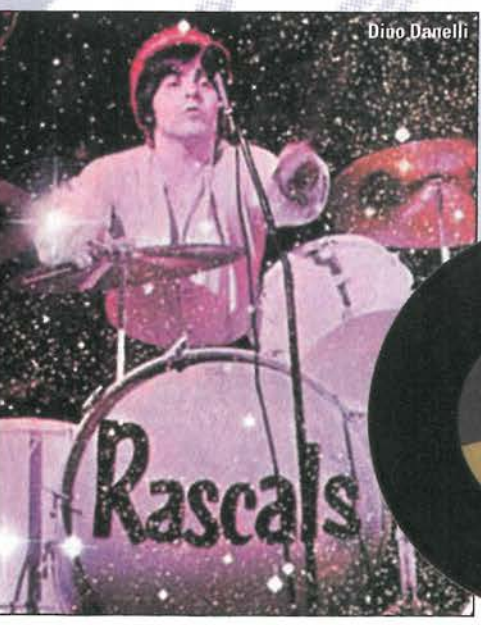
by Jim Duffy

The big band era of the 1930s and '40s was unquestionably the heyday of the "featured" drummer. Master sticksmen like Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, and Louie Bellson often took center stage and got the audience's blood pumping with brilliant solos that brought down the house. But as the swing era wound down in the early 1950s, the drummer once again seemed to blend into the stage backdrop, providing rudimentary backbeats for the bland male and female vocalists that dominated the American pop charts throughout the decade.

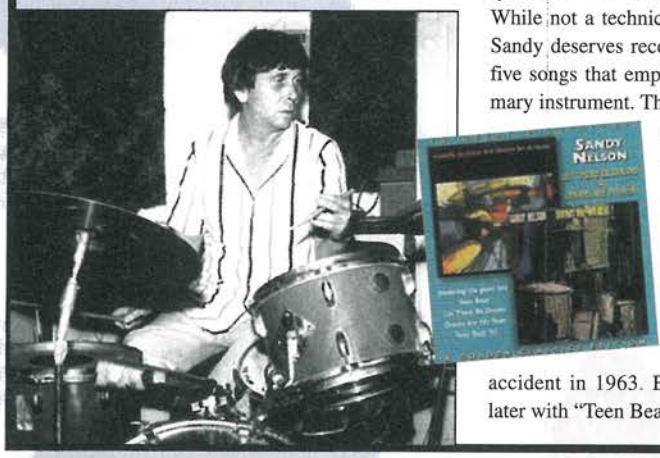
One notable exception to this was Cozy Cole's "Topsy" in 1958. But it wasn't until rock 'n' roll kicked into high gear at the turn of the decade that the beatkeeper once again emerged as a major ingredient of a band's sound. A lackluster decade of elementary rudiments quickly gave way to innovation, creativity, and, in many cases, sheer power.

Let's take a look at some of the best drum performances to hit the Top-40 charts between 1960 and 1969. Feel free to crack open your vaults and dust off your old 45s to listen along, while you cast your mind back to the days of Nehru jackets, love beads, incense, and flower power.

15. "Good Lovin'"
(The Young Rascals, 1966, #1)



Dino Danelli was one of the formidable heroes of '60s rock drumming. Known for his energy and his clean, tight playing style, Dino was a critical part of the "blue-eyed soul" that defined the sound of The Rascals. On this track, listen for the nice bell and tom work that he uses as a bridge between the end of each chorus and the next verse. Other highlights of Dino's work include "I've Been Lonely Too Long" (with its unusually loud drum mix) and "People Got To Be Free."

14. "Let There Be Drums"
(Sandy Nelson, 1961, #4)

Sandy Nelson made a career of instrumentals that featured repetitive drum patterns—usually with an exotic feel to the arrangements. While not a technically sophisticated soloist, Sandy deserves recognition for charting with five songs that emphasized drums as the primary instrument. This particular tune featured a simple paradiddle swing pattern on toms (as most of his tunes did), interspersed with James Bond–style guitar licks. Nelson's career almost ended when he lost his left foot in a motorcycle accident in 1963. But he came back a year later with "Teen Beat '65" and "Caravan."

13. "Twenty-Five Miles"
(Edwin Starr, 1969, #6)

This upbeat funk tune kicks into high gear right from the intro by legendary Motown drummer Uriel Jones. His straight-ahead rhythm track paves the road as Starr counts the miles during his long walk home. But the tune really sizzles as Starr gets closer to home, breaking into a drum solo/vocal countdown for the final few miles. The percussion-heavy arrangement allows Jones' trap set to become Starr's beating heart as the adrenaline pumps and the anticipation grows. It's a hot track that gets better by the mile.

12. "Hey Baby (They're Playing Our Song)"
(The Buckinghams, 1967, #12)

This Chicago pop-rock quintet is one of the most underrated bands of the 1960s. A big part of their trademark smooth sound came from drummer Jon Poulous. This tune reflects his active style, lively fills, and unique loose snare sound. Listen for that snare in the fills that lead so well into each chorus, and in the brief solo near the end. Equally enjoyable performances can be

heard on "Don't You Care," "Kind Of A Drag," and "Susan." Sadly, Poulous died of a drug overdose in 1980, at the age of thirty-two.

11. "I Got You (I Feel Good)"
(James Brown, 1965, #3)

JB's tunes are always notable for their energy, passion, and tight arrangements—and this one's tighter than a straightjacket. But that doesn't restrict drummer Melvin Parker from shining. His crack snare and hi-hat work in the verses and chorus give way to some nice cymbal-bell work and double strikes in the bridge. James Brown was so particular about the backbeat on his tunes that at one point he had five different drummers in his band simultaneously. He made the right choice with Parker for this session, resulting in one of the best R&B/pop tunes ever put on vinyl.

10. "Wipe Out"
(The Surfaris, 1963, #2)

Opening with a goofy cartoon laugh by band manager Dale Smalin, this tune launches into a beat that defined surf culture in the early '60s. Drummer Ron Wilson is in total control of the tune from beginning to end. What his drumming lacks in technical proficiency is made up for in sheer energy and those infectious accents on the toms. The routine is broken only for two guitar bridges that feature a great deal of thrashing on the crash cymbals. Tragically, Ron died of an aneurysm in 1989. But he leaves behind a milestone in pop/rock drumming.

9. "You Keep Me Hangin' On"
(Vanilla Fudge, 1968, #6)

The Fudge trademark was bombastic cover adaptations of hit tunes by other artists. Carmine Appice established himself among the royalty of rock drummers in these settings. His flamboyant playing style and creativity brought power to The Fudge's trippy repertoire. On this track (originally

Vanilla Fudge in 1968, with Carmine Appice at top right

done in Motown style by The Supremes), listen for Carmine's heavy bass drum punching through the mix, along with swelling cymbal rolls that end in a quick choke to mirror the dynamics of the complex arrangement.

8. "A Whiter Shade Of Pale"
(Procol Harum, 1967, #5)

Although the redoubtable Barry "B.J." Wilson is most associated with this classic British prog/pop group, it was Bobby Harrison who drummed on the band's signature hit. His playing perfectly mirrors the melancholy mood of the arrangement by keyboardist/vocalist Gary Brooker, which was loosely based on Bach's "Air On A G String." It could have become a funeral dirge if not for Harrison's extended drum fills, which drive the song forward. Ringo Starr used a similar technique to keep The Beatles' "A Day In The Life" from languishing. It's doubtful that one inspired the other, however, since the tunes were released concurrently in 1967.

7. "She'd Rather Be With Me"
(The Turtles, 1967, #3)

Turtles tunes were always innovative in their lyrics and musicianship, so quite a

The Turtles with Johnny Barbata, bottom right

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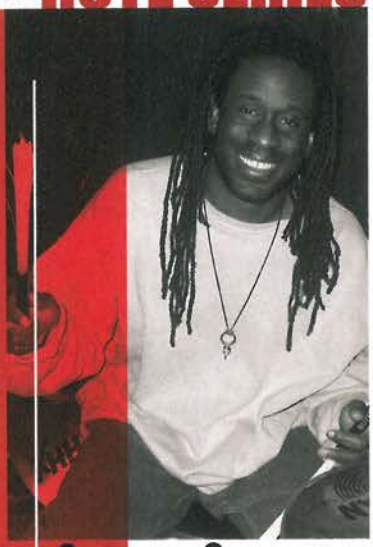

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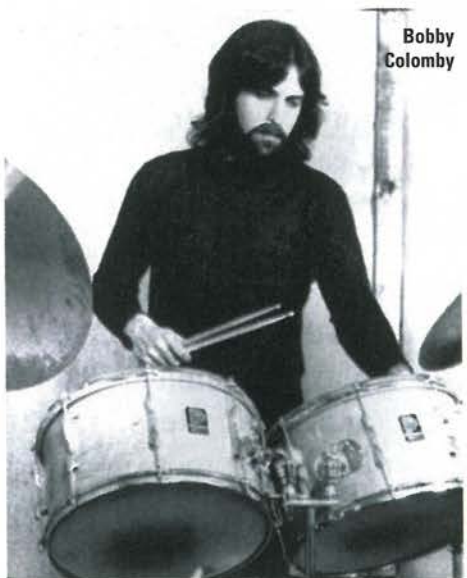
few could qualify for this list. We chose "She'd Rather Be With Me" for its unusual structure and its kicking "middle eight" section. Drummer John Barbata cuts loose from the opening build-up and into the first verse, then drives the rocker throughout its two and a half minutes with a solid beat. He punctuates the verses with active fills, displaying stick control not normally seen in '60s rock tunes. But the apex comes in the bridge, when Barbata switches to an off-beat on the snare, accompanied by an unusual right-hand pattern on a cowbell. After the song modulates to increase the tension, John breaks out with a terrific roll of 32nd notes into the last verse. After leaving The Turtles, Barbata went on to further success in the 1970s with Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young and Jefferson Starship.

6. "Spinning Wheel"
(Blood, Sweat & Tears, 1969, #2)

A rich, horn-based musical sound and the throaty vocals of David Clayton-Thomas brought jazz to the rock scene in the late '60s. Bobby Colomby set the beat for this innovative nine-man group, adding a touch of class and sophistication to the '60s drum scene. His work was brilliant—understated, yet powerful when needed. In this tune he plays to the dynamics of the arrangement, especially in the extended jazz break that begins at the two-minute mark. His crystal-clear sound and expert stick control is especially evident in his short solo at 1:26 (complimented by no less a drum figure than Buddy Rich in several interviews). With performances like this one, as well as "You Made Me So Very Happy" and "Smiling Phases," Colomby set the high-water mark for jazz/rock drummers for decades to come.



Bobby Colomby

5. "Happy Jack"
(The Who, 1967, #24)

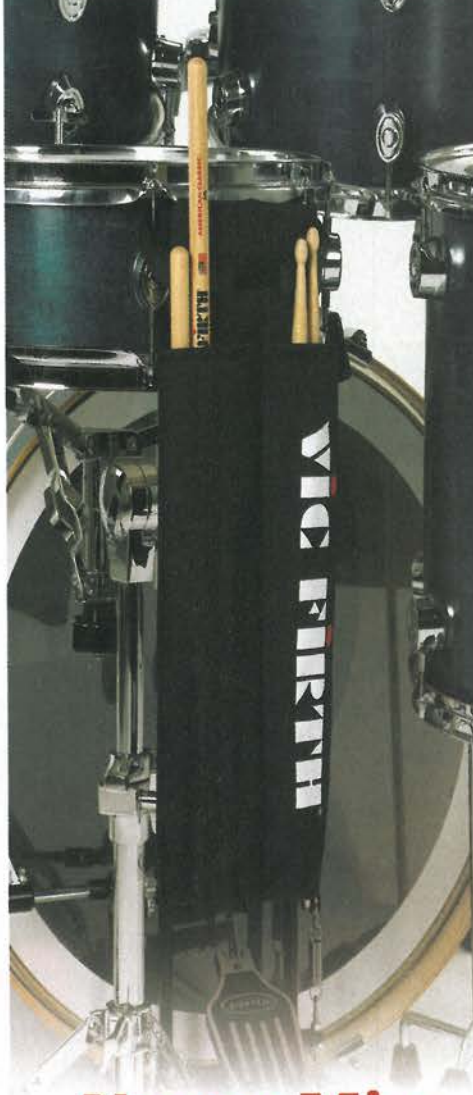
Although they had charted four hits in Britain, The Who were relatively unknown in America until

Keith Moon with The Who, 1967

this odd little ditty hit the US charts—introducing the country to the percussive chaos that was Keith Moon. His onstage antics, including destroying his drumkit every night, quickly became legendary. But so too did his remarkable drumming. Perfectly suited for the power chords of Pete Townshend and the wailing vocals of Roger Daltry, Moon's contributions to The Who's unique sound is undeniable. He fills this track with his trademark furious tom fills, but he's also tight when it counts, such as when he matches each guitar note at the song's closing to perfect effect.

4. "Whole Lotta Love"
(Led Zeppelin, 1969, #4)

When the word "power" is used to describe a drum style, few performers come to mind faster than John Bonham. Although unknown before his work with Led Zeppelin, Bonham quickly gained icon status among rock drummers, ushering in an age of heavy drumming that spanned two decades. On this highest-charting Zep single, listen to John's double-stroke bass drum accents (played on a single pedal) in the chorus, and to the extended two-measure fills that come during the fade-out. Bonzo was working overtime to guide bandmates Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, and John Paul Jones into rock history.



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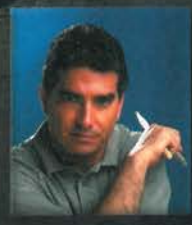

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3. "Summertime Blues"
(Blue Cheer, 1968, #14)

This tune has been covered by numerous groups. (The Who recorded a superb rendition in 1970.) But none were done with as much psychedelic fervor as Blue Cheer's version. Listening to Paul Whaley bang out the introduction in half time, you immediately realize that this is light years away from Eddie Cochran's rockabilly original. The galloping beat that Whaley ignites under the wall of distorted guitar and bass is as much fun to listen to as it is to play. An unorthodox mini-solo comes just before a wild instrumental break that ends in the same half-time arrangement heard in the intro. This San Francisco band proved itself a true "power trio" before the phrase even came into being.

2. "Bits And Pieces"
(Dave Clark 5, 1964, #4)

Hot on the heels of The Beatles, The DC5 was unique among '60s rock groups in that its drummer was also its leader. Because of this, Dave Clark redirected the spotlight on the timekeeper and held it there by means of an aggressive performance style. As can be heard on this tune leading into each new verse, Clark often arranged the group's songs with lengthy, dramatic snare fills. The band's trademark "thumping" sound, also quite evident in this tune, was a combination of bass drum and multi-tracked foot stomps and hand claps. These techniques were used frequently on the seventeen Top-40 tunes that the DC5 racked up, and were especially effective in "Do You Love Me?" and "Glad All Over."

Clark also acted as the group's producer and manager. Legend has it that he negotiated a much better record royalty for his DC5 mates than any other British Invasion band enjoyed, including The Beatles.

1. "Sunshine Of Your Love" (Cream, 1968, #5)

This song epitomizes 1960s rock drumming, which is ironic since Cream drummer Ginger Baker came from a blues and jazz background, and never even *considered* himself a rock drummer. Ginger was master of the free-form tribal beat, relying heavily on his four toms, and often abandoning the standard hi-hat/kick/snare backbeat patterns of most rock arrangements. From the moment he strikes the first beat of this tune on his flat-sounding high toms, the drumming is unmistakably pure Baker. His signature 32nd notes on the fills leading into the chorus, his use of crash cymbals on the downbeats during and after the instrumental break, and his quick, alternating strikes on snare and twin bass drums are all classic moves. They've often been copied, but they've never been duplicated to Ginger's level of skill and intensity. His lengthy, improvised fills during the "I've been waiting so long" lines make this the quintessential Baker track, although his work on "White Room," "Swlabr," and "Toad" are also required listening for any serious drummer. The 1960s saw a lot of innovation and change in rock percussion, but it didn't get better than this.

Aficionados of '60s drumming will likely challenge some of our selections, and there certainly are dozens of excellent tracks that could be worthy alternates. Some Honorable Mentions might include "A Little Bit O' Soul" (Music Explosion), "Hush" (Deep Purple), "Come On Down To My Boat" (Every Mother's Son), "All Along The Watchtower" (Jimi Hendrix Experience), "Hello I Love You" (The Doors), "I Can't Get Next To You" (The Temptations), "Beg Borrow & Steal" (Ohio Express), and the obscure chestnut "Hot Smoke & Sassafras" (Bubble Puppy). Additionally, limiting ourselves to Top-40 singles didn't allow for the inclusion of breakthrough album cuts like Led Zeppelin's "Communication Breakdown," Jimi Hendrix's "Manic Depression," and most of The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper* album, which brought about a new era in miking and recording drum tracks.

Consider this a primer for anyone too young to remember red sparkle Ludwig kits with white wood interiors. And to those who grew up in paisley-print shirts and elephant bellbottoms (which always managed to snag our bass drum beater), we say it's time to break out the oldies compilations and play along once again with the songs that taught us this wondrous craft we call drumming.

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Steve Goulding

Drumming Silent, Drumming Deep

by Adam Budofsky

A true unsung hero of drumming, Steve Goulding has been present during an impressive number of modern music's high points. New wave fans would bow down to him if his only legacy was the sizzling drumming tour de force on Elvis Costello's classic "Watching The Detectives." Lucky for us, that epochal recording session was only the beginning. Stints with Nick Lowe, Graham Parker, and, for the past ten years, The Mekons, have sealed his rep as a powerful, articulate drummer who is supremely sensitive to the song, but clearly unafraid of a bit of volume. Steve's even gone "off track" on numerous occasions, recording with highly regarded acts like underground heroes Poi Dog Pondering, Israeli club queen Ofra Haza, and Tuvan genre benders Yat-Kha.

To get Steve's thoughts on some of his finest sides, *MD* sat down with him between tours with The Mekons, supporting their latest recording, *Punk Rock*. Famously mercurial, on this album the band has updated tracks from the original British punk revolution, which they are an inseparable part of.

Graham Parker & The Rumour

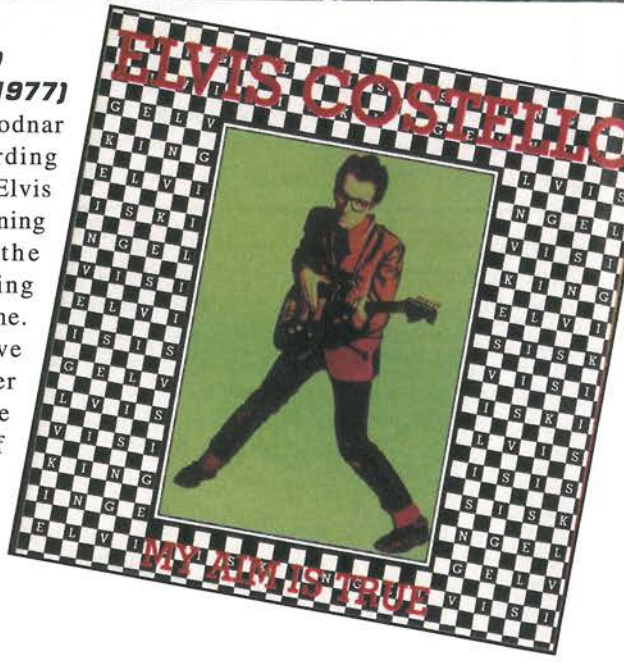
Howlin' Wind (1976)

This was my first "professional" recording experience. It was *such* a steep learning curve. And it was amazing hearing myself for the first time on the radio. Of course, nobody who heard it knew it was me playing drums! But it was wonderful either way.

Elvis Costello

My Aim Is True (1977)

Bassist Andrew Bodnar and I were recording these demos with Elvis and sort of auditioning musicians for the band he was putting together at the time. Keyboardist Steve Nieve came in after having drunk like half a bottle of liquor. [laughs] But he was very accomplished by then, and played great.



Nick Lowe
Jesus Of Cool (1978)

Playing with Nick Lowe is always so much fun, you don't feel like you're working at all. I remember he was being sort of "experimental" at the time, and he had me play the drum tracks alone, like, "Play the verse part for this many bars, then the chorus...." And this was before the days of click tracks. It was terrifying listening back: Oh, that's slowing down there! Actually, we never got credit for playing on those cuts, because [Stiff Records head] Jake Riviera had this "punk" idea that it was uncool to do that. Well, at least it's a good story to tell at the pub. People are like, "Oh, you played on *that*?"

Graham Parker
Squeezing Out Sparks (1979)

What a wonderful experience it was working with producer Jack Nitzsche. He would tell all these great stories about working with blues greats, Neil Young, The Rolling Stones.... He really straightened us out in a good way, getting us to play a lot fewer notes. For the first two or three days we were driving him nuts. Eventually he went out and got himself a six-pack or something [laughs], came back, and got us to play much more for the song. He did it in a great way, though.

Garland Jeffreys
Escape Artist (1981)

After *The Up Escalator*, Graham Parker decided he wanted to work with different musicians, so The Rumour was no longer his band. One of the things we did was go to the States and back Garland Jeffreys. That was a great album, and I still do some playing with Garland.

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The Mekons

Fear And Whiskey (1985)

I saw the band on the recommendation of a friend, and they were just awful. [laughs] There were like twenty of their friends in the audience, and even *they* were leaving. But eventually my friend, bassist Lu Edmunds,

and I joined up, and after a very slow two-year period, we got to a point where we sounded good live. We were sent to the States to tour, where we were received very well. The first side of that record is drum machine, and the second side is me. We recorded that in one day.

It was actually a while before I got into the country influences that came out on that record. At first I was like, "Okay, I'll go along with this for a while, then hopefully we'll move onto something new in six months." But eventually I began to really appreciate country music and the drumming on some of it, like Kenny Buttrey, who played with Dylan and so many country musicians. There was a lot of depth there, and he played more than just a dopey shuffle or something. He played little riffs on the drums.

Ofra Haza

Shaday (1988)

You know, I can't even remember having played on that! Apparently it did very well, though. I was one of several drummers who appeared on the album. I think I did some programming. I don't really enjoy doing that, though.

The Mekons

Rock 'N' Roll (1989)

That record sounds so good because, unlike our usual method, we wrote and rehearsed those songs before going into the studio, and just pounded them out. Unfortunately, that old story happened where our original contact at the record company left, and A&M Records didn't know what to do with us. Eventually they wouldn't release our subsequent albums, but wouldn't let us out of our contract either. I found myself in New York sitting around tables with lawyers who were younger than me, getting really frustrated. So I left, even though I felt terrible about "abandoning" the band. The troubles continued for them, but I eventually saw them play in Chicago, and I was like, "That should be *me* up there." So I re-joined them in time to record one track for the album *Retreat From Memphis*.

Poi Dog Pondering

Pomegranate (1995)

They were such a nice group of people, and I really liked playing with them. They were huge in Chicago—we'd play like five sold-out shows in a row in 800-seat rooms—but it just didn't happen for them on a national scale.

Archer Prewitt

White Sky (1999)

Archer is so talented, and very specific about what he wants. He plays drums, too, so he'll sometimes show me exactly what he has in mind.

Yat-Kha

Aldyn Dashka (2001)

That was very interesting. The bandmembers didn't speak English, but they were really nice, and the album came out very well. I toured with them too. They are not very loud, which I like, because I've gotten tired of just pounding all these years; the drums will only get so much louder. I've enjoyed using mallets and brushes more.

Megan Reilly

Arc Of Tessa (2003)

Meg's wonderful. We toured as a duo, which was great. Rather than play more busily, I play more restrained, leaving lots of space. It sounds weirder that way, and I love it. I'll be working on Meg's new album very soon.

The Mekons

Punk Rock (2004)

I didn't really feel the need to go back and

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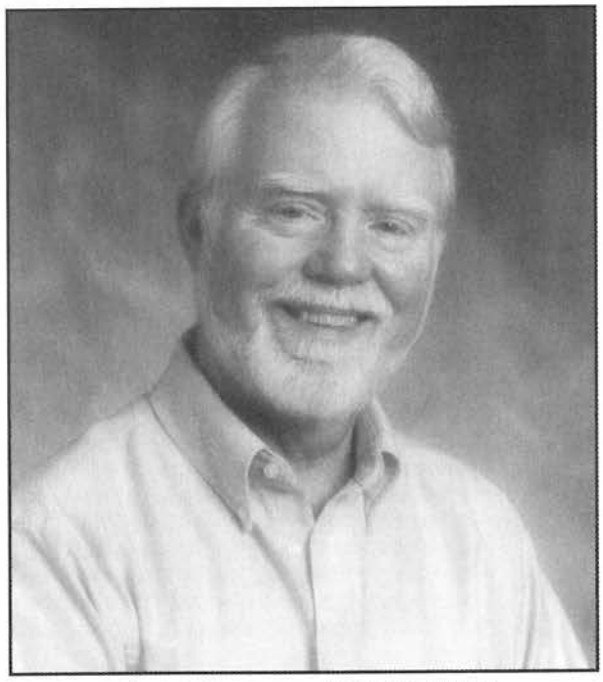

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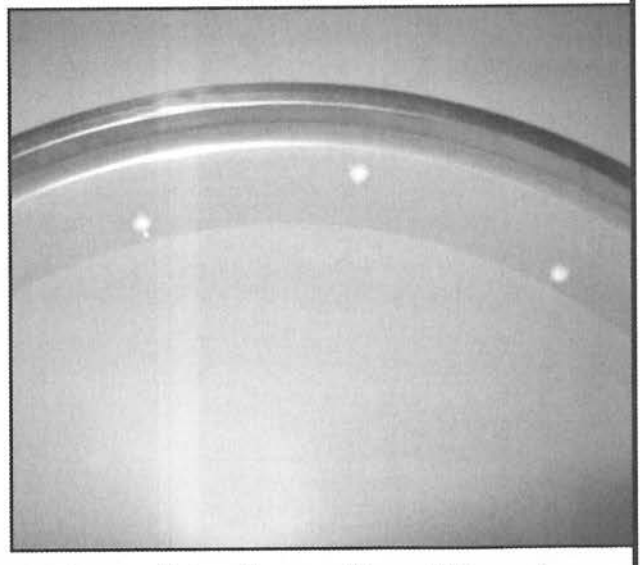

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listen to the original versions of these songs, some of which we've played over the years. But back in the original days of punk, it was such an exciting time. I remember seeing The Talking Heads and The Ramones in England, and hearing the first Patti Smith record—just fantastic. Most of the new punk music is made with so many concessions to the marketplace, it's not nearly as interesting as it once was.

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Jon Langford	Skull Orchard
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The Pine Valley Cosmonauts	The Executioner's Last Songs
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The Killer Shrews	The Killer Shrews
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Graham Parker & The Rumour	At Marble Arch
Graham Parker & The Rumour	Stick To Me
Graham Parker & The Rumour	Parkerilla
Graham Parker & The Rumour	The Up Escalator
Graham Parker & The Rumour	Not If It Pleases Me: BBC Live 76—77
Graham Parker	Live On The Test
Graham Parker	BBC Live In Concert, 1977-1991
Graham Parker	Deepcut To Nowhere
The Rumour	Max
The Rumour	Frogs, Sprouts, Clogs & Krauts
The Rumour	Purity Of Essence
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Poi Dog Pondering	Liquid White Light
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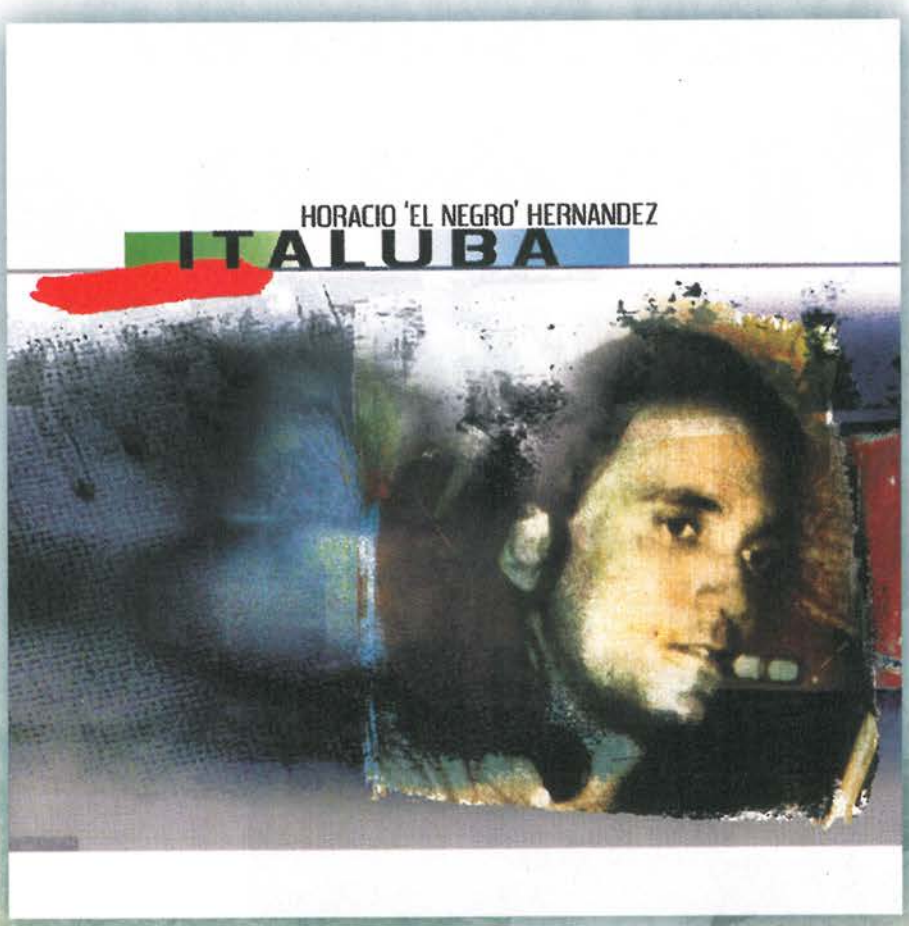

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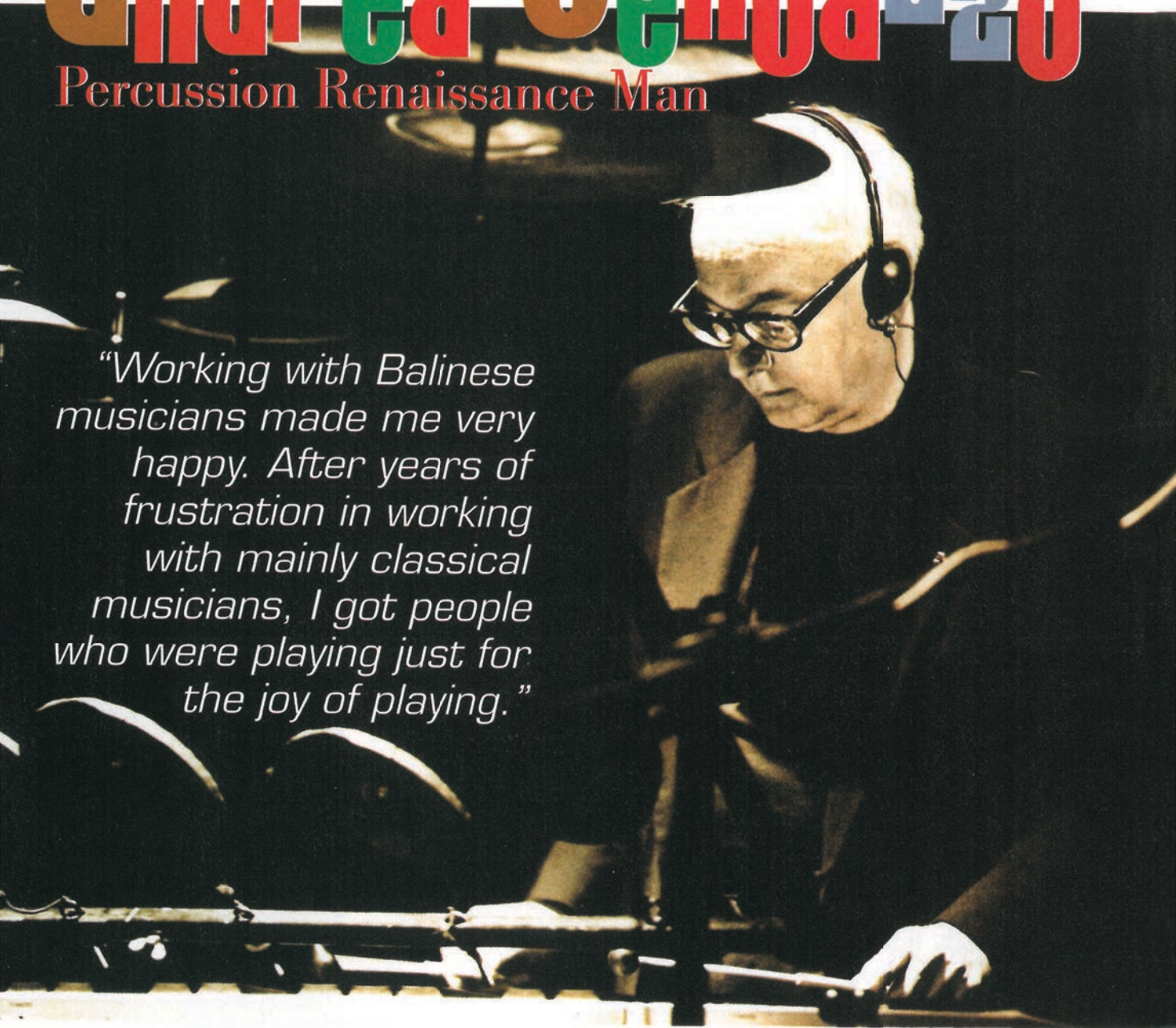
Andrea Centazzo

Percussion Renaissance Man



"Working with Balinese musicians made me very happy. After years of frustration in working with mainly classical musicians, I got people who were playing just for the joy of playing."

by Michael Bettine

Andrea Centazzo's career has moved in many different directions, often simultaneously. Besides being one of Italy's most revered drummers, he has also worked as a composer, a filmmaker, a video artist, a director, a writer, and an instrument designer.

"When I started my career thirty years ago," Andrea says, "I was really into jazz drumming. But in 1973 I went into a used record store in New York, and I found one of the first Nonesuch LPs on Balinese music. That was the beginning of my interest in gongs and minimal music for percussion. The same year, I was studying with

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Andrea Centazzo

Pierre Favre, who was already using gongs. Pierre played African drumming records during the lessons. So basically I've always been kind of involved with ethnic music."

The Inventor

Andrea's interest in ethnic music had him looking for new sounds. In 1974 he contacted Italy's UFIP Cymbal Company. "I approached UFIP," he recalls, "saying, 'I'm a young drummer trying to make it on drumset. But I'd like to get into more melodic forms of percussion. Can you help me out?' They said, 'Sure. Come on down.'"

Andrea helped design various gongs, bells, and percussion sounds for UFIP. But his most memorable invention has been the Icebell, a small, rough, extra-thick bell/cymbal hybrid with a clear, piercing tone. "Unfortunately," says Andrea, "UFIP didn't have the strength to get the patents. They didn't have enough money to protect my work or to protect themselves. So the Icebell has been copied by everybody in the world. We did a lot of stuff. The trash set that Paiste is selling now, I made twenty-five years ago."

Ironically, it was Paiste that approached Andrea in 1984, asking him to help them develop their line of specialty sounds. Since UFIP had not been able to support and protect Andrea's creative efforts, he made the move.

The Musician/Composer

As part of Andrea's musical explorations in the 1970s, he formed his own record label, Ictus (now reissued on the Italian New Tone label), to document his own work and that of Italy's burgeoning improvised jazz scene. His *Shock!!*, a duo with Italian saxophonist Gianluigi Trovesi, is hailed as one of the most important Italian jazz recordings of all time. Subsequent releases saw Centazzo collaborating with musicians like saxophonists Steve Lacy, Evan Parker, Lol Coxhill, and Vinnie Golia, guitarist Derek Bailey, and drummers Pierre Favre and Alex Cline.

Playing an expanded drum setup of gongs, cymbals, and sounds inspired Andrea to compose more, as well as to work in films. "In the early '80s, I asked myself why nobody was using percussion to make soundtracks," he says. "So I proposed that idea to directors and producers—and everyone laughed at me.

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'Percussion's not enough,' they said. 'You need an orchestra.' So in '84 I said, 'I'm going to make the movie, and I'm going to put my own music with it.'

"My solo percussion CD, *Visions*, includes the compositions 'Tiare I-IV,'" Andrea continues. "I was playing them in concert. I decided to buy a camera, start shooting, and put together a video that would show people that percussion instruments could really be the core of a soundtrack. I made a 38-minute video titled *Tiare*, sent it around to festivals, and contacted journalists about it. Believe it or not, in 1985 and '86 that video won all the international video festivals! People started to call me to *direct* videos. I had wanted to work more with percussion, and now I started to work *less*. Still, I was making nice money doing videos."

In 1991 the desire to work more on composition and film soundtracks brought Andrea to Hollywood. For almost five years he was totally out of the percussion world. Finally, Remo Belli [founder of Remo Drumheads] brought him back. "We got in touch because a painter friend of mine asked

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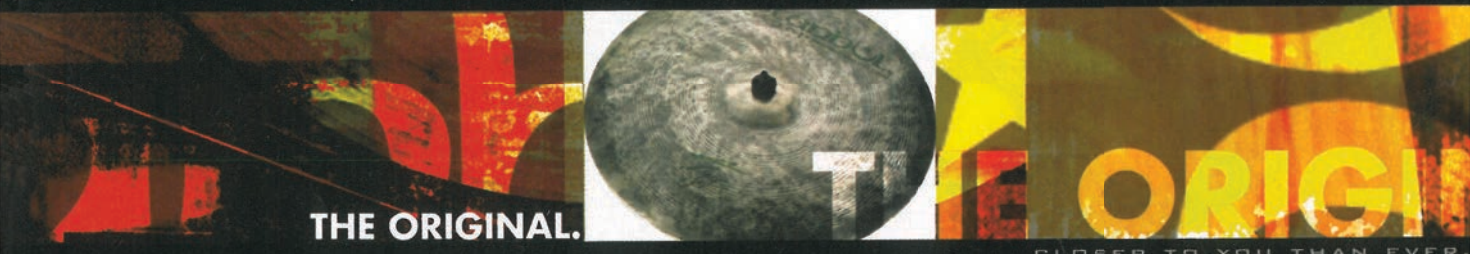

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Remo to make a drum sculpture for him," Andrea recalls. "I called Remo, saying, 'Hey, I'm here.' He said, 'Where the hell have you been for the last ten years? You've been in town without calling me? Without playing? You're crazy! I could've helped you out with this and that.' The same thing happened when I called Rich Mangicaro at Paiste. So I've been making myself alive again, and that's where I am now."

The Complete Artist

Andrea's reconnection with the percussion industry inspired him to combine drumming with his composing and film work. In the 1990s he created a series of multi-media operas: *Tina* (based on the life of photographer, artist, and revolutionary Tina Modotti), *Simultas*, and *Memento*. All three use video images extensively. These, in turn, led to *Sacred Shadows*, a project that features Andrea on drums and gongs, a Balinese gamelan ensemble, keyboards, horns, a choir, narrators, dancers, and video images.

"Working with the Balinese musicians made me very happy," says Andrea. "Not only musically, but personally, because after years of frustration in working with mainly classical musicians, I got people who were playing just for the joy of playing. Those guys are incredible."

But there were some technical problems—like the fact that the gamelan players didn't read music. So Andrea went to Bali and watched the group rehearse their own music. He recorded what they played into a computer. "I sliced up their patterns, even some single notes, and completely reconstructed a new kind of music," Andrea explains. "I put all the Western instrument parts on top, and

Here's a selected discography of Andrea's unique performances.

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Artist	Album
Andrea Centazzo	*Visions*
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I recorded a sequence with the entire music composition. Then I went back to Bali and played the Balinese guys their parts, one by one.

"In the beginning it was a bit confusing for them. They don't work with measures, 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4, as we work. They use the same concept as Indian ragas, with long phrasing. So they started to rehearse, memorizing their patterns. As soon as they got the new gamelan composition in mind, I rehearsed them with the computer, having them play with the click, and slowly putting a new Western instrument on the top each time, so as not to confuse them. That way they didn't lose the basic gamelan concept. It was really appealing, because they were keeping their own language and we were keeping ours, but we found a common musical ground."

Another of Andrea's projects is *Ancient Future*, a solo performance that combines video images and triggered percussion samples with Andrea's live drumming. "My experience with the Balinese musicians really put me in a different direction," he says. "So the first section of the concert is all based on Balinese chanting and patterns, and on the pentatonic system. It's kind of new compared to the old improvised solos that I was doing, or to compositions like those of John Cage or Steve Reich. The combination of video and music creates a total sensory concert experience that people seem to enjoy—especially people who aren't accustomed to a solo percussion concert. It works very well."

One of Andrea's more interesting collaborations came about in the summer of 2003. He accompanied author Jeffrey Eugenides, who won the Pulitzer Prize for his novel *Middlesex*, during a reading at the Literature Festival in Rome. "We did the performance in front of the Colosseum, with 2,700 people watching," says Andrea. "There were two big screens. One was with my own videos, and the other was so the audience could see me from the back. When Jeffrey was reading the book—in English—one screen had the translation and the other had images of us performing.

"When we rehearsed in the afternoon, I prepared some patterns, and I stopped in places where Jeffrey was just narrating the book. When we started to perform, the atmosphere was incredible—2,700 people totally silent. Jeffrey was reading with such intensity. I started to play, and when I stopped where we had planned, Jeffrey turned to me and gestured for me to keep going. I wound up playing through all that he was reading. Afterwards I did the three pieces from *Ancient Future* by myself, and the people just loved it. I had 2,700 people totally blown away by a percussion concert. It was a really great night."

And More To Come

Always on the move, Andrea recently spent a month back in Bali researching the various gamelan styles for a book he plans on writing. He's been asked to do some concerts in the Middle East, and he plans to go to Japan to study traditional Japanese music. In June he'll perform *Ancient Future* at the Ultimate Drummers Weekend in Melbourne, Australia, after which he plans to stay and study Aboriginal music.

"I've been fascinated by Bruce Chatwin's book *The Songlines*, which is about the Aboriginal tradition. So that's another project I'd like to do. I have many ideas. The only problem," Andrea laughs, "is that my wallet's empty. But I'm okay."

To hear Andrea Centazzo's amazing work, be sure to tune in to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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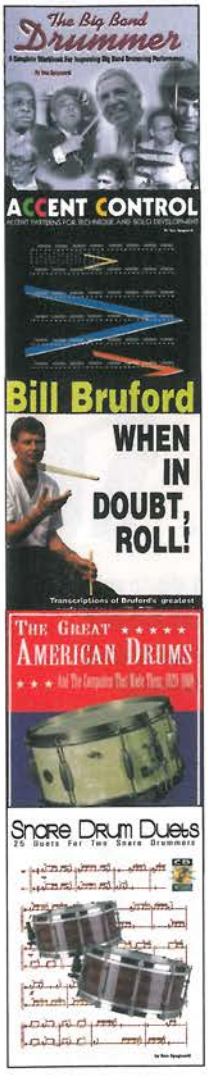

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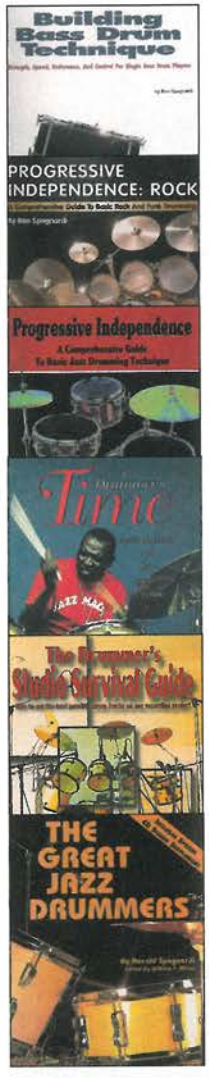

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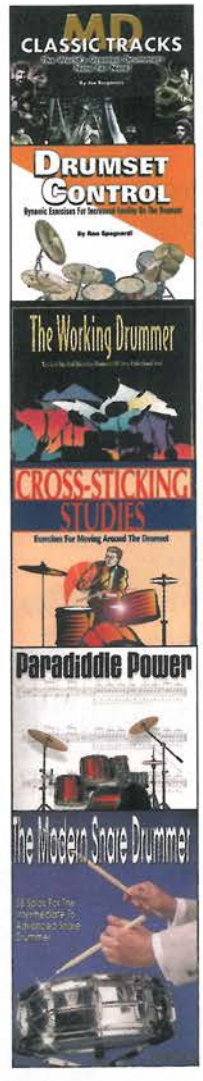

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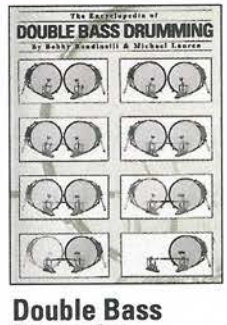

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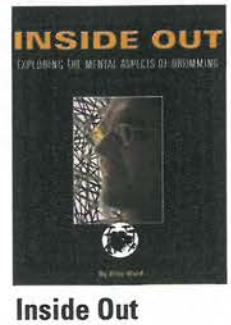

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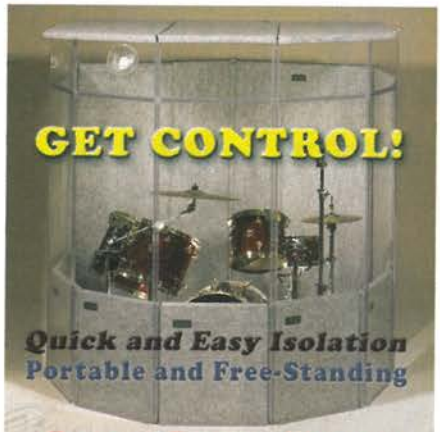

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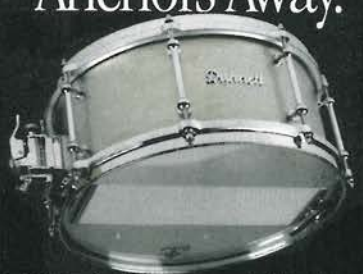

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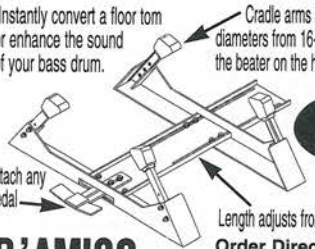
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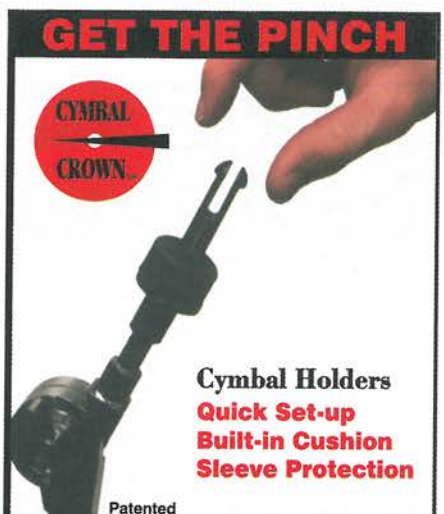

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Tosin Aribisala

Shortly after his birth in Nigeria in 1978, Tosin Aribisala displayed an interest in music. "When I was two," he recalls, "I started fiddling with any object in the house that could make a musical statement." Tosin's father—an enthusiastic jazz and African music aficionado—encouraged his son's interest by buying him records and taking him to concerts.

Drum lessons began when Tosin was nine. He studied rudiments, stick control, four-way coordination, and a wide variety of styles including Afrobeat, funk, jazz, and African tribal percussion. His list of musical influences includes Fela Kuti, Jimi Solanke, Sikru Ayinde, Dennis Chambers, Tony Allen, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Jack DeJohnette, Bobby McFerrin, and John Coltrane.

Tosin's drumming accomplishments include a world tour and recording projects with Nigerian music star Femi Kuti. He currently performs and teaches in Laurel, Maryland. Other projects include jingle production and a book on African tribal drumming applied to the drumset.

Tosin plays a Mapex kit with Zildjian cymbals and LP percussion. "My goal," he says, "is to become a better drummer—and an influential one—as well as to foster the essence of education in my locality and around the world."

Vince Van Donselaar

Albuquerque, New Mexico drummer Vince Van Donselaar has spent his eighteen-year drumming career listening to and playing as wide a variety of styles as possible. He played in the stage band and marching band of his high school. He studied jazz, Afro-Cuban, and Latin-Brazilian music at The University Of North Texas. And he cites influences as varied as Stewart Copeland, Neil Peart, Billy Cobham, John Bonham, Steve Gadd, Jon Fishman, and Billy Martin.

All this diversity stands Vince in good stead with his band Civitas, whose repertoire ranges from funk to bluegrass. The group has released two CDs (*Liquid Handlebars* and *Blue Stone*, www.civitasmusic.com) and has toured the US. Vince has also recorded a CD with Starseed, and he recently completed a West Coast tour with that group, playing percussion.

Vince says that his drumming can best be described as "groove-oriented yet improvisational." He focuses on hi-hat and ride work, and also incorporates lots of percussion into his setup. He plays a tobacco sunburst DW kit with brushed nickel rims, along with Zildjian cymbals and LP percussion.

Vince's goals involve continuing to play with Civitas, while also doing hand-percussion gigs with other groups to improve his percussion skills. He's hoping for greater recording and touring success.

Nick Summers

Don't let Nick Summers' youthful appearance fool you. The almost-twenty-one-year-old has already established himself as a drummer to be reckoned with in the Louisiana music scene. Nick was born in Georgia, but moved to New Jersey, Texas, and then northern Louisiana, where is drumming career began in earnest. There, school and church music programs gave him the opportunity to develop his basic skills. They also brought him to the attention of Nashville studio veteran Mark Smith.

Smith exposed Nick to funk and New Orleans second-line music. He also gave the youngster an understanding of feel and groove. Most importantly, he introduced Nick to regional touring artist Monty Russel. After sitting in frequently with Russel's group The Hardcore Troubadors, Nick eventually took over the drum chair on a full-time basis. Touring with The Troubadors subsequently brought him to the attention of other acts for which the group would open. As a result, Nick has been invited to jam with musicians from the bands of Willie Nelson, Dwight Yoakum, Robert Earl Keen, Delbert McClinton, and Confederate Railroad.

Nick also has recording experience, having drummed on several worship-music projects over the past five years. He plays a Tama Starclassic Maple kit on a Gibraltar rack, with Zildjian cymbals and LP percussion.

Says the young drummer, "There's nothing like the force that comes out when musicians are reacting together. And when people get into it, then I enjoy it all the more. That's what keeps me going."

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Birch In The Middle

Pearl SBX Session Series Kits

Pearl's mid-priced Session Series now includes new SBX kits, with drums that feature six plies of 100% premium birch. These professional-quality kits feature newly designed lugs inspired by Pearl's high-end Masterworks Series. This new high-performance lug is said to promote resonance by maintaining minimal contact with the shell, while increasing tuning integrity. SBX kits are offered in Vintage Wine, Solid Black, Tobacco Burst, and Blue Burst lacquer finishes. Shell packs consisting of two rack toms, one floor (or hanging) tom, one bass drum, and tom-mounting hardware list for $1,799.

(615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com.

Mondo Returns!

Remo Re-Issued Mondo Snare Drum

Remo has re-released the drum that was originally designed to be a cross between a snare drum and a hand drum. Mondo snare drums incorporate Acousticon drumshells, Mondo FiberSkyn3 drumheads, and custom finishes, plus the latest generation of tuners, snare throw-offs, and snare wires. With its unique combination of features, earthy yet powerful sound, and unconventional, rimless tuning apparatus, the versatile Mondo snare can be played with sticks, brushes, mallets, fingers, and hands. It can be used as a primary or accessory drum in virtually any drumset or world percussion setup.

Mondo snare drums are now available in 10" ($349) and 12" ($399) sizes in addition to the original 14" ($449) size. All are available in a choice of Remo's distinctive Metalized finishes: Bronze, Brass, and Nickel-Silver.

(661) 294-5600, www.remo.com.

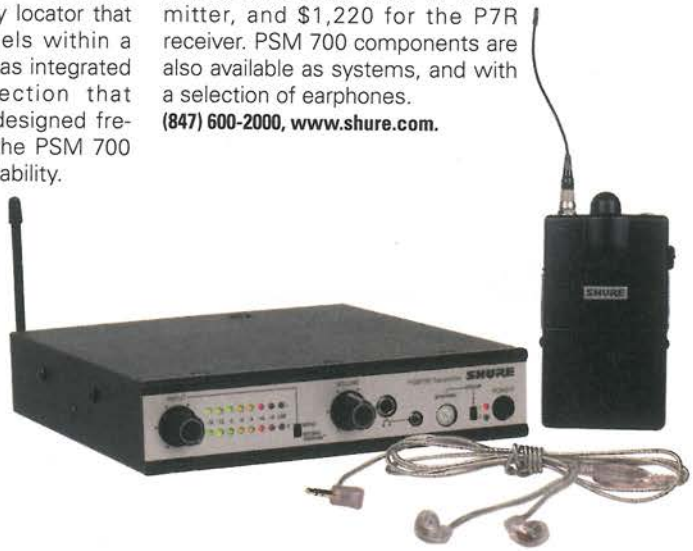
So Whaddya Hear?

Improved Shure PSM 700 Personal Monitor System

Shure's PSM 700 Personal Monitor System now features Audio Reference Companding—said to deliver sound quality far beyond the limits of conventional wireless technology—as well as more compatible channels than ever before. The system is available in two new frequency bands—H3 and L2—which offer up to 64 usable frequencies in the 524-554 mHz and 632-662 mHz ranges. This permits the simultaneous operation of as many as 32 systems when combining both bands (area dependent). Components for the PSM 700's existing HF band (722-746 MHz) will continue to be sold separately, but will not offer the new features.

Other features of the new PSM 700 system include a frequency locator that identifies available channels within a given environment, as well as integrated dynamic overload protection that reduces RF distortion. Redesigned frequency-select controls on the PSM 700 transmitter offer easier readability.

List prices for components include $1,326 for the P7T transmitter, and $1,220 for the P7R receiver. PSM 700 components are also available as systems, and with a selection of earphones.
(847) 600-2000, www.shure.com.



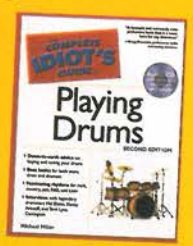
The Reference Shelf

2004 Z Time International Magazine (Zildjian)

Ziljdian's *Z Time* for 2004 has a new look and layout. Along with an updated design and fresh content, the magazine boasts a removable Product Guide insert featuring every instrument and accessory item offered by the company. Articles include stories on and lessons from Zildjian artists such as Keith Carlock, Manu Katché, Chad Sexton, Steve Smith, and Atom Willard. The special "Z Icon" article for 2004 is Steve Gadd. Highlights of that piece include Steve's *American Drummers Achievement Award* and the newly released K Custom Session line, which Steve helped Zildjian design. The magazine is available free at most Zildjian dealers.
(781) 871-2200, www.zildjian.com.

Michael Miller: The Complete Idiot's Guide To Playing The Drums, Second Edition

(Alpha Books/Penguin Group)



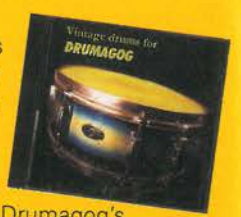
Despite its self-deprecating title, this book provides a thorough overview of the history and theory of drums and percussion instruments, detailed information on purchasing, tuning, and maintaining drums, and lessons on basic music notation, rhythm, and time signatures. The updated edition includes snare drum fundamentals, drumset playing (including soloing), brush and mallet techniques, and more. An included audio CD contains exercises and solos from the book, tuning examples, and play-along tracks. List price is $21.95.
www.idiotsguides.com.

Scott Schroedl: Best Of The Red Hot Chili Peppers (Hal Leonard)

This book contains note-for-note transcriptions of the drum parts (as well as the lyrics, melody lines, and chords) to twenty Peppers tunes from six different albums. It's part of Hal Leonard's *Drum Recorded Versions* series that also includes Beatles, Hendrix, Nirvana, and classic rock collections. List price is $19.95.
(414) 774-3630, www.halleonard.com.

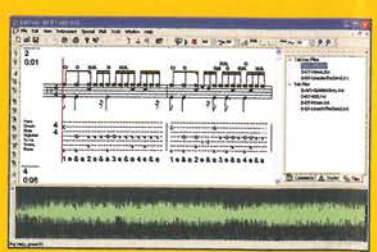
Vintage Drums For Drumagog

(Dan's House Studio)



This CD contains samples of vintage drums taken from the collection of drummer/collector Dave Ferraro. Included are rare drums from Leedy, Gretsch, Ludwig, Slingerland, Rogers, Pearl, Yamaha, and more. The extensive collection offers toms, kicks, and over 1,300 snare drums. The samples are arranged in Drumagog's ".gog." file format for use with that plug-in, and the disk includes a self-extracting file that will install the sample collection on a PC.
(610) 691-8820, www.danshousestudio.com/vintage_drums.

TabTrax: Drum Tab Converter



TabTrax imports drum tabs from Internet sources such as mxtabs.net and drumtab.net, and instantly converts them into standard sheet music notation and playable MIDI files. According to TabTrax, there are over 30,000 drums tabs available online today, for free.

TabTrax automatically creates standard drum notation from tabs, and lets you hear the tabs on your computer. Drummers can learn grooves, fills, or whole songs from their favorite artists by listening to drum tracks in isolation from the rest of the song. Drum tracks can be played back at any speed or in an endless loop for practice. They can also be synchronized to the original song, letting you see the drum music animate while the song is playing. (Karaoke for drummers!)

TabTrax is also a drum-friendly music composition tool. You can create original drum tracks or copy, paste, and modify existing songs with a powerful, easy-to-use editor. TabTrax interfaces to most general MIDI synths for studio-quality sound, and exports MIDI files.
www.2112design.com, steve@2112design.com.

Now You Can Pick And Choose

Meinl Generation X Tom's Becken Available Individually

Up until now, Meinl's Generation X Tom's Becken cymbals were only available in pre-packs. But demand for individual models—especially the 14" Filter China—has led the company to also make the cymbals available individually. The series contains contemporary crash cymbals designed to provide acoustic and electronic drummers with sounds that resemble artificially engineered cymbal samples. The line includes the 14" Filter China ($139), 16" Synthetik Crash ($200), 17" Kompressor Crash ($220), 18" Kinetik Crash ($249), and 18" Signal Crash/Ride ($249).

(615) 227-5090, www.meinlcymbals.com.

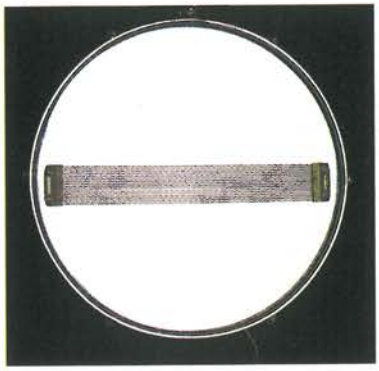
A New Strainer In Town

Worldmax S-3 Strainer And SWG Snare

Worldmax's new S-3 strainer is now standard equipment on certain models of their award winning Black Dawg series snare drums. It's also available as an aftermarket accessory for custom drum builders. The patented strainer spans the center bead on metal shell drums without the need for an additional spacer. The strainer is said to offer smooth, silent action with no back-off while playing. The all-metal units are available with black ($37.50) or chrome ($40) levers.

To complement the strainers, Worldmax also offers new SWG Series snare wires, featuring imported German wire. Meticulous care is taken in soldering the wires to brass ends, which offer protected strap or string (included) mounting options. Snare sets of 16 or 20 wires are available for 10"-, 12"-, 13"-, and 14"-diameter drums. Prices range from $13.75 to $17.95.

(615) 365-3965, worldmaxusa@aol.com.



With A Song In Their Hearts

CLE Drums Ratio Designed Drumset

CLE Drums states that their ratio-designed drumset creates a harmonic balance that allows all of the drums on the kit to "sing" as one voice. When one of the drums in the set is struck, all of them will vibrate in a sympathetic unity. This, in turn, causes an increase in the volume, clarity, warmth, and sustain of the drum that is struck.

A drumset with a 75% ratio means that the depth of all of the drums (except the snare) is 75% of their diameters. The ratio design works with varying results in any percent configuration.

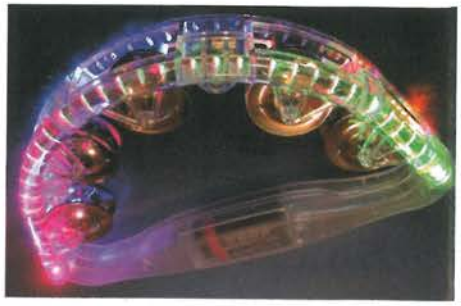
(410) 876-7950, www.cledrums.com.

Light Up The Night

Mares LT-03 Light-Emitting Tambourine

According to the manufacturer, the LT-03 Light-Emitting Tambourine "creates a harmony of light and sound whenever you shake it." This professional-quality instrument can be used in any performance application, but its greatest effect takes place in the dark. The half-moon shaped tambourine emits four colors of bright light (red, blue, green, and yellow) when shaken.

The 9.5" x 6" body of the tambourine is made from strong, clear polycarbonate and is equipped with five double-row jingles. A 9-volt battery is included with the unit, and can be expected to last for up to ten months with regular use. List price is $39.90 (US) or $54 (Canadian), plus shipping.
www.Maresb2b.com.



And What's More

PEARL's P-1000 Power Shifter ProStock pedal is said to provide lightning-fast response and heavy hitting power by utilizing a highly responsive round cam. The cam accepts a chain or a belt, and both are included. The pedal features Eliminator styling and Pearl's QuadBeater. A carry case is included, at a list price of $199.
(615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com.

SENNHEISER's Evolution e614 drum overhead condenser microphone expands Sennheiser's range of instrument mic's while retaining the Evolution line's exceptional value and excellent sonics (40Hz-20kHz). The e614's super-cardioid pattern, in combination with a neutral response and moderate sensitivity, promotes isolation from other instruments on stage. Powered by external phantom power, the compact e614 can tolerate extremely high SPLs, and is claimed to capture the sound of cymbals and hi-hats like no other mic' in its price range. The mic' boasts a ten-year warranty, and is priced at $399.
(860) 434-9190, www.sennheiserusa.com.

The Ben Gillies Heartbeater stick by **VATER** comes from the skinsman of Silverchair, one of Australia's biggest bands. Sized between a 5A and a 5B in the grip, it's a solid-feeling drumstick with an acorn tip that gives outstanding rebound. Vater considers it a great stick for mid-volume rock situations. It measures 16⅛" long and .580" in diameter, and lists for $13.50 per pair.
(781) 767-1877, www.vater.com.

The **CODA** DH-308-D double bass drum pedal is said to be very durable and affordable. The new chain-driven pedal is built with a cast metal frame in a striking gunmetal finish. It includes dual springs, felt beaters, and a baseplate complete with hook-and-loop fasteners and built-in spurs to prevent excess movement. The pedal lists for $169.95 and is recommended for beginning drummers.
(415) 570-0970, www.themusiclink.net.

GROVER PRO PERCUSSION's T2/THS concert tambourine features specially heat-treated German Silver jingles. Each jingle is hammered on both sides, heated in a special micro-oven, then slowly cooled until the alloy turns a blueish hue. The metal is then crystallized and the molecular structure is realigned. This results in a lively array of overtones with a super-dry, "crunchy" sonority. The hardwood shell is available in double-row configuration and features Grover's "double width" jingle slotting. The drum is finished in a special red mahogany stain finish and comes with a carrying bag at $146.
(781) 935-6200, www.groverpro.com.

The M150 mallet for bass marimba completes **VIC FIRTH's** Ensemble Series of marimba mallets, which were designed with DCI Hall of Fame member Thom Hannum. With a plastic core covered in 3/16"-thick latex for a full-bodied sound and a rich fundamental, the M150 features added weight for great projection of the "low-end" voice, making it excellent for bass line parts. The large, clear-finished birch handles are 16½" long. List price is $46.50 per pair.

Though designed for the marimba, Ensemble Series mallets also serve well on vibraphones. They are an excellent choice for solo playing as well as for marching band, drum corps, and WGI-type indoor concert and marching percussion ensembles.
(781) 326-3455, www.vicfirth.com.

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$29.99

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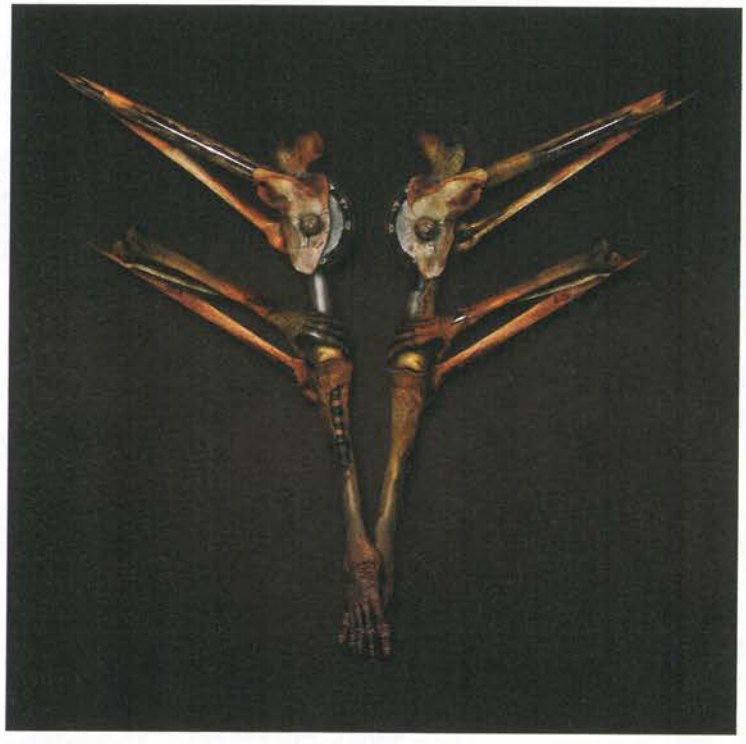
ALBUMS

Fear Factory Archetype (Liquid 8 Records)



Fear Factory honed their metal-industrial formula for more than a decade before disbanding in 2002. But now they're back, with an album that's often thrashier than previous efforts. A big change is the guitar work, which is now handled by former bassist **Christian Olde Wolbers** instead of seven-string ace Dino Cazares, who quit the group. Another difference is the drumming of **RAYMOND HERRERA**, which is more out-front and menacing now. Herrera's always been a speedy powerhouse stylist, yet here he almost seems bionic. His performances also complement the curiously percussive nature of many of the tunes. FF still counter harsh mechanistic traits with melodic ones (though less frequently here), and man's sticky relationship with technology continues to be a key lyrical theme. A somewhat different but sonically fearsome return. **Jeff Perlah**

Ed Thigpen Scantet #1 (Stunt)

Since moving to Denmark in the early '70s, jazz drumming great **ED THIGPEN** has tapped the talents of Scandinavia's brightest rising talents ("Scantet"). As senior mentor to these northern "Jazz Messengers," Thigpen delivers robust, tuneful swing and bop with his classic, bluesy feel. His trademark elegant brush work is here, as well as spirited stick magic and irresistible cymbal riding. **Thomas Franck** (tenor), **Jens Winther** (trumpet), **Jesper Bodilsen** (bass), and **Kasper Villaume** (piano) share their leader's love of balance and good taste. No flash, just class. (www.sundance.DK) **Jeff Potter**

Atomship Crash Of '47 (Windup)

It's always fun to hear a new band with a drummer who raises your eyebrows and leaves you with an idea or two. Such is the case with **CHAD KENT**, who's got a good feel, is technically awesome, and delivers plenty of "wow" fills. Musically, Atomship has a great modern-rock approach, contrasting Kent's drumming with a guitarist who is focused on texture and harmonic progression. A dark mood runs throughout the album, which contains some interesting writing that ranges from introspective to aggressive. All this adds up to a style that distinguishes Atomship from many groups, making them one to check out. **Martin Patmos**

The Claudia Quintet I, Claudia (Cuneiform)

A gifted drummer with a clear style, a pungent sound, and compositions that draw on influences from funk to the avant-classical of Frank Zappa, on *I, Claudia* **JOHN HOLLENBECK** leads The Claudia Quintet through a surreally charged world. Equally delicate and dynamic, the Quintet spends as much time fixated on atonal changes as slipping and sliding over Hollenbeck's elastically sharp grooves. Hollenbeck is quick-witted throughout, rolling on the unexpected tom or developing a surprise beat that seems equal parts Steve Gadd and some mad dumbek player. If you can wade through the murky bits, you'll be rewarded with highly original improv. **Ken Micallef**

SIGNIFICANT REISSUES by Ken Micallef

Sam Rivers, Lee Morgan

When tenor saxophonist Sam Rivers recorded *Fuschia Swing Song* with **TONY WILLIAMS** in 1965, it was pronounced as "out." Today it sounds mainstream yet still riotous, with Williams performing with a similar fire and polish as on Miles' *Four And More*. Tony's drumming is tight, popping, and hyper- and inter-active, exploding with dynamic hi-hat/snare fusillades at every opportunity. The album includes three alternate versions of "Downstairs Blues Upstairs." (Blue Note)

The sprightly, sparkling drumming of **BILLY HIGGINS** is heard in impeccable form on Lee Morgan's 1967-69 recording *Sonic Boom*, a fine example of the Morgan-Higgins machine found on classic albums like *Cornbread* and *Sidewinder*. Higgins is the epitome of drive and grace; **David Fathead Newman** and **Cedar Walton** only add to the high artistic level. Philadelphia's **MICKEY ROKER** brings up the rear on the second half of the album, his subtle, smoky feel and crystalline cymbal work moving the bop of Morgan, **George Coleman**, and **Julian Preister** with all the cool of a '60s sports coupe. Roker never calls attention to himself, but like Shadow Wilson before him, his great musicality and understated fire works wonders. (Blue Note)

Matthew Von Doran

In This Present Moment (bCAT)

Guitarist Matthew Von Doran combines outstanding composition, state-of-the-art sound, and a world-class lineup to create one of the finest jazz/blues albums in recent memory. Drummers **PETER ERSKINE**, **TERRI LYNE CARRINGTON**, **GARY NOVAK**, and **MARCUS BAYLOR** embrace each tune with sensitivity, dynamics, musicality, and incredible-sounding instruments. There is much to learn from this recording about the beauty and art of acoustic drumming. What you get is a collection of true masters of their respective crafts, performing at the top of their game. (www.matthewvondoran.com)

Mike Haid

Allan Holdsworth Then! (Alertnity Records)

Taken primarily from a 1990 Tokyo concert, *Then!* is a great addition to the Allan Holdsworth catalog, and stands as yet another exceptional British improvisational jazz-rock record. With keyboardist **Steve Hunt** and bassist **Jimmy Johnson**, the band blazes through nine tracks including three improvisational "Zones" and Tony Williams' classic "Proto Cosmos." Drummer **GARY HUSBAND** is stunning throughout, playing with incredible fire, finesse, and a heat-seeking technical perfection that is thrilling. Husband's stamina and speed seem endless, and his creativity is inspirational. A revelation that was almost lost for good, *Then!* is a mind-blower.

Ken Micallef

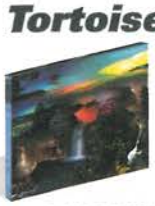
Omar & The Howlers

Boogie Man (Ruf Records)

Boogie Man boasts drummers **TERRY BOZZIO**, **CHRIS LAYTON**, and **GEORGE RAINS**. Rains, his name missing from the outside cover credits, is certainly anything but invisible on the first two tracks, going ZZ-Top on the rims, second-line on snare, and rubbing a mean double shuffle in an incendiary five-minute span. "Whipper" Layton, united with Double Trouble bassist **Tommy Shannon**, is as comfortable in the back of the groove as anybody, delivering flavor and soul as well as crisp time. Fans of Bozzio (and blues) shouldn't dwell on TB's tracks here, which unfortunately come across as relatively sterile and pedestrian.

Robin Tolleson

Tortoise It's All Around You (Thrill Jockey)



Mellow and melodic—romantic, even—Tortoise's new LP could be the soundtrack to yet another re-imagining of *Romeo & Juliet*. By and large it's not as rowdy as its predecessor, 2001's *Standards*. But this is Tortoise, all right, as evidenced by the twangy baritone guitar, the mallet percussion, and the weirdness. Bandmembers **JOHN HERNDON**, **JOHN MCENTIRE**, and **DAN BITNEY** are all drummer-producers, and it shows: A lovingly peaked-out snare comes through nice and harsh, like an overexposed photograph. In the genre-defying title track, vibes and guitar circle one another endlessly with a hard-panned drumset on either side, each playing a different bossa-like variation. Neato.

Michael Parillo

Global Village Orchestra

Globalistics (LopLop Productions)

Throw together ten musicians from eight different countries, and you might have a muddy musical mess. The fact is, this tri-continental orchestra is a PC critic's dream, given its stock of diverse and capable performers, including Iranian kit percussionist **AFRA MUSSAWISSADEH**. There is something deep and moving here, brought out by vocal chants, tenor sax, violin, mournful wind-instrument passages, and throaty percussion, such as ghatam and darbuka played by vocalist **Behsat Uvez**. As "Gravity," "Blue Wedding," and "Yaschlik" slide across EuroAsian-African borders, tiny pregnant percussive bursts dance to these melodies without being too invasive or predictable. There's beauty in this complexity.

Will Romano

The Get Up Kids

Guilt Show (Vagrant)

Now on their fourth album, indie rockers The Get Up Kids are hardly their own namesake, fast becoming veterans of their scene in a few short years. The drumming of **RYAN POPE** is also hardly kid-like, instead offering a slew of fresh ideas on *Guilt Show*. Pope cuts swingy tom/cymbal patterns on "Never Be Alone" and even conjures Ringo Starr on "Holy Roman." Still, his straight-ahead tracks are amongst his brightest spots ("How Long Is Too Long," "Martyr Me"), driving the rest of the 'Kids with a youthful eagerness. A passionate and potent performance, Pope's mature drumming never sounded better.

Waleed Rashidi

Beat Box by Ed King

Floetry Floacism "Live" (Dreamworks)

Floacism "Live" in fact starts off with a brand-new studio cut, "Wanna B Where U R." The song's drum programming, performed by **DARREN "LIMITLESS" HENSON**, is a perfect example of why the underground sound of soul/hip-hop music surfaced to the mainstream. Consisting of clean, crisp drum sounds and an undercurrent of The Average White Band's "School Boy Crush," "Wanna B" illustrates Henson's understanding that a beat doesn't have to be "busy" to be artful—a concept acoustic drummers often ignore. The in-concert portion of this album consists of ten well-balanced tunes featuring **TREMAYNE WALKER** on kit and **JAMES MASON** on percussion. Some songs were played along with a minidisk containing the original drum sounds from Floetry's popular debut album, *Floetic*. Walker does a great job of keeping the integrity of that album by maintaining a strong pocket, while adding the right kind of links to give it the feel of a live experience. While some drummer/percussionists might frown on playing to pre-recorded music, Mason recently related that he finds this type of format to be more challenging, giving him more room to create. From the sultry sound of "If I Were A Bird" to the feel-good, chart-topping rhythm of the hit "Floetic," *Floacism "Live"* is definitely a record any drummer, aspiring to know what's going on *now*, should study.

Decapitated The Negation (Earache/Wicked World)

Poland's Decapitated breathed new life into death metal—and metal in general—with 2001's *Nihility*, and they do it again with their extraordinary third album. Music school sure paid off for these young'uns (their average age is twenty), as head-spinning chops are used to carve out extremely dynamic and knee-jerkingly hum-able arrangements. **Vogg** and **Hiro**'s chainsaw guitar riffs and eerie prog- and jazz-friendly leads are complemented by **VITEK**'s jaw-dropping, surgically precise drumming, which juggles an abundance of tempos with peculiar complexities, colorful flair, and a team ethos. And **Sauron**'s Cookie Monster roar is one of the tastiest in the genre. Top-of-the-line death metal. **Jeff Perlah**

Brian McKnight Diffusion Project (Diffusive)

There's DIY written all over this album, and that's a good thing. We get to hear various New York City drummers and their drums unfettered by big studio processing. The drumkit has rarely sounded so vibrant, what with harmonics buzzing around and no compression in sight. **BRIAN McKNIGHT** comes from the Terry Bozzio school, both in terms of chops and reverence for composition. His compatriot drummers, **GEORGE MOURTOS** and **BRIAN DELANEY**, provide solid company, while **MIKE CAMPENNI** distinguishes himself on a surprisingly melodic drum rendition of the old Monk ditty "Well You Needn't." Did we say "DIY"? You purchase this one via email. (bm10031@yahoo.com) **T. Bruce Wittet**

Chicago Underground Trio Slon (Thrill Jockey)

By only listening to the opener, "Protest," you might wrongly label this record a throwback. Granted, drummer **CHAD TAYLOR** recalls Miles-era Jimmy Cobb or Tony Williams (clear, precise ride cymbal) and Ed Blackwell (a boxy blend of African and New Orleans rhythms). But don't be fooled; this disc is not a retread. A molten mixture of live and overdubbed tracks flows naturally, like bubbling, techno-jazz lava. In some instances, Taylor's acoustic textures border on experimental electric white noise. Throughout, beautiful trumpet melodies, warm bass tones, and delightful swing patterns make for wondrously offbeat music. **Will Romano**

Fred Anderson/Hamid Drake Back Together Again (Thrill Jockey)

Chicago jazz notables Fred Anderson (tenor) and **HAMID DRAKE** (drums) have performed together in bands for thirty years, and this stripped-down duet disc celebrates their intuitive bond. The improvisational cuts have a '60s free-jazz heart, employing diverse rhythmic styles. Whether using sticks, brushes, or bare hands, Drake delivers an irresistible swinging pulse with broad strokes of color and pyramiding ideas. The sinuous interplay he honed behind Pharoah Sanders and Don Cherry ideally complements Anderson's earthy, sweeping sax. At their swirling peaks, the duo evokes the soaring spirit of *A Love Supreme*. **Jeff Potter**

Himsa Courting Tragedy And Disaster (Prosthetic)

With hundreds of sound-alike extreme-metal groups appearing every year, it's refreshing to catch the massively versatile Himsa, who skillfully blend '80s metal and thrash with today's hardcore punk and death metal. And it was drummer **TIM MULLEN**'s job on *Courting Tragedy And Disaster* to direct some heavy traffic by infusing a variety of sharp elements, all within four-minute tracks. (Mullen has since left the band.) The drummer's common denominator is his feet, constantly slamming 16ths. But the Dave Lombardo-esque punches on the intro to "Jacob Shock" and the Nicko McBrain-inspired breakdown of "Cherum" show that he's been listening intently throughout the years. **Waleed Rashidi**

The Fred Hess Quartet The Long And Short Of It (Tapestry)

MATT WILSON's drumming is a lot like a happy little kid: playful, joyous—and all over the place. "Norman Says," from saxman Fred Hess's *Long And Short*, reveals many of Wilson's rapidly shifting delights: clever accents of the melody, tasty ghost-note flurries, an insistent backbeat, big snare flams. Things are more straight-ahead on "Happened Yesterday," which showcases Wilson's crisp swing beat and offers him a brief solo. Closing track "The Last Trance" finds Matt navigating his kit in a linear fashion, building dynamically until he's making quite a racket. Then he backs off and lets the horns mop up. **Michael Parillo**

Hella The Devil Isn't Red (5RC)

Drummer **ZACH HILL** and guitarist **Spencer Seim** make up the duo Hella. Together they play an unusual style of instrumental music that is something like a cross of punk with '70s-era King Crimson, with numerous other influences in the mix. The two are inseparably locked in this music, harnessing odd phrasing and strangely melodic noise with rapid, disjointed rhythms. Primarily working with bass and snare beats, Hill provides a constant barrage of twisting ideas. And while there is not much stylistic diversity throughout the album, the unique approach is something to investigate. **Martin Patmos**

Tony C & The Truth Demophonic Blues (Lava)

NYC's Collective instructor and all-around monster **TOBIAS RALPH** was once known for his blazing chops and power fusion technique. But here vocalist Tony C works the kid over in a series of hard blues numbers that fall somewhere between AC/DC and George Thorogood. Ralph drops it deep and dirty throughout, his slightly behind-the-beat, hip-hop flavored touch adding funk and definition to what might otherwise be just another blues band. Ralph never shows off, but proves that blues drumming can be creative and clever in the right hands. **Ken Micallef**

BOOKS

Second Line: 100 Years Of New Orleans Drumming

by Antoon Aukes (C.L. Barnhouse Co.)

level: all, $24.95 (with CD)

Though our author hails from The Netherlands, his heart lies way down yonder in New Orleans. Antoon Aukes has compiled an impressive overview of second-line drumming styles and history here. In fact, this volume deserves a place alongside the currently reigning book on the topic, *New Orleans Jazz And Second Line Drumming* by Herlin Riley and Johnny Vidocovich. Whereas Riley's book features extensive transcriptions and analyses of key players, Aukes emphasizes the step-by-step chronological evolution of the second-line style, illustrated by short two- or four-bar examples. He then clearly demonstrates how early brass-band styles were gradually absorbed into jazz, R&B, and funk. Helpful exercises are included, and all CD examples are well chosen and played. Don't let Aukes' address throw you; this is the real deal. (www.barnhouse.com) **Jeff Potter**

101 Drum Tips: Stuff All The Pros Know And Use

by Scott Schroedl (Hal Leonard)

level: all, $14.95 (with CD)

Wouldn't it be nice if there was a book that succinctly dealt with all of the ins and outs of being a drummer, from setting up your kit to checking the bearing edges on your toms? Actually, it *is* kind of nice, now that Scott Schroedl has written this book, which measures up well to its title. From #1 to #101, each tip is covered in several paragraphs and accompanied by photos, and by some simple notation when called for. Besides covering useful topics like stick grips, finding the right cymbal, and dynamics, Schroedl includes some basic grooves like country and funk. Especially given its modest price, drummers may very well want to keep this package close at hand. **Fran Azzarto**

100 Tips For Drums (You Should Have Been Told)

by Pete Riley (Sanctuary)

level: intermediate, $24.95 (includes CD)

This book targets experienced players who strive to be more well rounded. Through clean prose and crisp playing (check out the tracks on the accompanying disc), ex–Republica drummer Pete Riley educates without being too preachy. The easiest way to turn drummers off is by insinuating that they've neglected practice and/or would be lost without expert advice. Riley's no snob, and in short, you'll trust this guy to be your teacher. Suddenly you'll be motivated to tackle tricky Steve Gadd–inspired paradiddle-diddle exercises and apply the Afro-Cuban grooves found here. Look for pertinent quotes from Steve Smith, Peter Erskine, Vinnie Colaiuta, Simon Phillips, and *Modern Drummer* regular Billy Ward. (www.peteriley.net) **Will Romano**

DVDs

Opeth

Lamentations: Live At Shepherd's Bush Empire 2003 (Koch/Music For Nations)

level: all, $14.98

Opeth have a knack for blending bestial extreme metal with melodic, sometimes even delicate elements. And the Swedish band excel with this formula on the *Lamentations* DVD, devoting much of the concert's entire first half to music from the tranquil, non-metal *Damnation* (2003) and the other to *Damnation*'s monstrous metal/prog companion, *Deliverance*. (There are also cuts from *Blackwater Park*.) Mellow or raging, Opeth perform all the material beautifully. **MARTIN LOPEZ**' tuneful, artful drums become a particular focal point of a gig that sounds as remarkable in surround-sound as it looks. Notice Lopez and singer **Mikael Åkerfeld**'s synergy on "Deliverance," the Eastern flavors of "Closure," and the Genesis vibe of "To Rid The Disease." And don't miss the interview with Lopez during the accompanying documentary. **Jeff Perlah**

Mudvayne Live: All Access To All Things (Sony)

level: all, $14.98

Some drummers dismiss Mudvayne for their cryptic names, makeup, and nü metal angst. And this DVD, filmed during last year's Metallica-headed Summer Sanitarium tour, will likely not change their minds. As the title suggests, viewers get a less-than-glamorous look at a very hard-working band—in sweltering heat, on long bus rides, and during exercises in profanity. (Parents are strongly advised.) I must admit that at times I felt like I was being yelled at by a band suffering a collective panic attack. But then I'd find myself seduced into their sound world by some hypnotic lyrics of contemplation and depth. All the while, **MATTHEW "SPÜG" McDONOUGH** would be keeping all the dynamics and feels appropriate and solid. Time shifts, gunfire drum fills, cymbal flourishes—Matt's playing seems to hold the whole emotional package in tact. You can tell by his furrowed brow that something else is going on inside *this* mind, like Pollock laying down some serious contrasts on canvas. Say what you will about Mudvayne, you must concede to their effort and vision. **Sean Enright**

Thomas Lang

Creative Control (Hudson Music)

level: intermediate to advanced, $49.95 (2 discs)

On this lengthy (5 hours, 14 minutes) double DVD set, Austrian drumming sensation Thomas Lang joins the ranks of Marco Minnemann, Virgil Donati, and Mike Mangini as one of today's extreme-interdependence pioneers. Throughout this package, Lang performs countless advanced exercises for developing four-way independence around the kit. His feet and hand exercises are inspirational, while his multi-pedal orchestration concepts are mind-boggling. Amid all the complexity, the drummer somehow remains relaxed, well spoken, and articulate in his presentations. Other topics covered include orchestrating rudiments, foot control, ergonomic mechanics, advanced interdependence/coordination, practice and contempo-groove concepts, and the ever-popular stick tricks and showmanship. Lang also goes in depth discussing his challenging Sonor Twin Effect pedal techniques. Several feature performances are included as well. Kudos to Hudson for yet another cutting-edge DVD that includes trailblazing features such as DVD-ROM audio files in ACID (PC) and REX (Mac) formats, which allow viewers to loop any exercise or performance and change tempos without affecting the pitch. *Most* beneficial, though, are the 94 printable PDF transcription files of Lang's performances and exercises. Entertainment, education, inspiration, printable transcripts, audio files...this set is a worthwhile investment for drummers wanting to keep in step with today's cutting-edge drumset innovators. **Mike Haid**

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Woodstick 2004 Sets Drumming Record

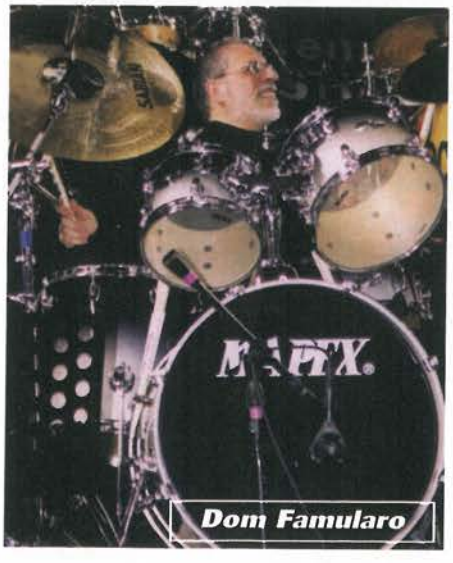
Woodstick 2004, held at the Tacoma Dome in Tacoma, Washington this past February 16, attracted 504 drummers with their kits. Shattering last year's record of 260 drummers, the event established a new *Guinness Book* world record for the most drummers playing on drumsets at the same time. Drummers traveled from as far away as Haiti to participate in the event.

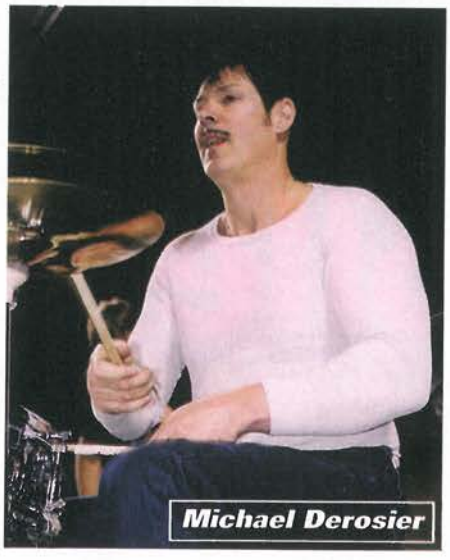
Hundreds of drummers of all ages and skill levels lined the floor of the Dome. In addition, drum notables **Alan White** (Yes), **Dom Famularo**, **Scott Rockenfield** (Queensrÿche), **Liberty DeVitto** (Billy Joel), **Jeff Kathan** (Paul Rogers), **Michael Derosier** (formerly of Heart), and blues drummer **Tony Coleman** took part in the event.

The day opened with White leading the mass of drummers in playing along to a recording of John Lennon's "Imagine." White played on the same kit he used to record the song with Lennon more than thirty years ago. Then he switched to the beveled-glass Orlich kit (shown below) for further performances. Later, celebrity drummers were given the opportunity to show off their chops by trading fours with the participants, as well as with each other. Rock 'n' roll's best-selling instrumental group—and Tacoma natives—The Ventures (with **Leon Taylor** on drums) played some of their classic hits along with the assembled drummers.

In addition to breaking the *Guinness Book* record, Woodstick also raised money to fight polio. The event was produced and coordinated by **Donn Bennett Drum Studio** of Bellevue, Washington. For more information on Woodstick, surf to www.bennettdrums.com.

Story and photos by Chris Cornelis





Over 500 drummers took part in Woodstick 2004.

KoSA 2004

The ninth edition of the KoSA International Percussion Workshops & Festival will be held July 26 to August 1 at Castleton State College, in Castleton, Vermont. This year's confirmed faculty includes **Mike Mangini** (Steve Vai), **Dave Garibaldi** (Tower Of Power), **Jim Chapin** (author) , **Memo Acevedo** (Tito Puente), **Emil Richards** (L.A. studio legend), **Alessandra Belloni** (frame drum artist), **Robby Ameen** (Paul Simon), **Jerry Mercer** (April Wine), **Richie Flores** (Eddie Palmieri), **Eduardo Leandro** (marimba artist), **Larry Marchese** (Sibelius software), **Allan Molnar** (MIDI educator), **Oumar N'Dyaye** (West African drumming & dance), **Trichy Sankaran** (South Indian drumming), **Jeff Salisbury** (Johnson State College), **Candido Camera** (conga legend), **Rick Van Horn** (*Modern Drummer*), **Marco Lienhard** (Ondekoza taiko), **Dom Famularo** (international clinician), **Aldo Mazza** (multi-percussionist), **Mario DeCiutiis** (electronic percussion), **Kenwood Dennard** (Berklee College of Music), **Glen Velez** (Paul Winter Consort), **John Beck** (Eastman School of Music), **Lou Robinson** (didgeridoo educator), **Répercussion** (international performing artists), and the KoSA rhythm section: Oscar Stagnaro (Paquito D'Rivera) on bass and Alon Yavnai (Paquito D'Rivera) on piano.

KoSA is a hands-on intensive percussion camp that covers rock, jazz, Latin, and funk drumming, classical percussion, Brazilian, Arabic, and Indian hand drumming, percussion technology, Afro-Caribbean rhythms, Japanese taiko drumming, solo marimba, jazz vibraphone, timpani, and percussion ensemble. Participants enjoy small daily classes, play with the rhythm section in residence, participate in masterclasses, and perform in recitals.

Every evening, participants are treated to exciting concerts in the KoSA Festival, which is open to the public. The week culminates with a faculty concert that is recorded live for CD release. For more information and to register, contact AdventureTravel, (800) 540-9030, travel@advtravelagencymail.com. To purchase KoSA CDs, contact KoSA Communications, www.kosamusic.com.

Sabian Supports Emergenza Competition

For the second straight year, Sabian is the exclusive cymbal supplier for Emergenza, a band competition in which pop and rock bands across Europe and North America compete for a shot at "the big time." The event, which originated in Europe, is making headway into North America with competitions in Chicago, Boston, Buffalo, Philadelphia, and the Washington, DC area. Regional winners will compete for the top spot at a major event in Germany.

Prizes range from musical instruments supplied by the sponsors, to participation in special Emergenza package tours, to the opportunity to get signed to major-label recording contracts. Sabian has supplied Emergenza with a variety of cymbal setups that include HHX, AAX, and AA series cymbals, including the new AA Metal-X. For additional information, go to www.emergenza.net.

In Memoriam

Jack Sperling

Jack Sperling, who performed with many of the great musicians of the 1940s and '50s, died February 26, as the result of a stroke. He was eighty-one.

Sperling started out with Bunny Berigan's final big band (from 1941 to '42), then played in a Navy band headed by Tex Beneke from 1943 to '45. After his discharge, he played with Beneke's civilian orchestra up until 1949. Sperling later became a strong asset with the Les Brown big band (1949-53), for Bob Crosby (1954-57, including Crosby's television series), on several occasions in the 1950s with the Dave Pell Octet, and most prominently with Pete Fountain during the Dixieland clarinetist's most productive years (1959-63).

In the 1960s, Sperling performed with the NBC Orchestra on the variety shows of Steve Allen, Dean Martin, and Andy Williams, and on *Rowan And Martin's Laugh-In*. His film work included playing with Henry Mancini in *The Days Of Wine Of Roses*, and he performed live or in the studio with Ella Fitzgerald, Eddie Miller, Benny Goodman, Charlie Barnet, and Bob Florence. He continued to freelance with big bands and all-star mainstream groups into his seventies.

The Sperling family asks that anyone interested in remembering Jack support the musical arts by contributing to the music education program or scholarship or their choice.

John Siomos

John Siomos died at his home in Brooklyn, New York, on January 16, at the age of fifty-six. A versatile drummer, Siomos started his career with Mitch Ryder & The Detroit Wheels in 1966. He later played for several years with Harry Belafonte, as well as with Todd Rundgren, with whom he recorded the hit "Hello It's Me."

But Siomos is best known for his work with singer/guitarist Peter Frampton. He cowrote Frampton's hit "Do You Feel Like I Do," toured with Frampton from 1972 to '78, and is the drummer on the multi-platinum *Frampton Comes Alive* album.

Horst Link

Horst Link, former owner and president of the Sonor Drum Company, died February 12 in Vienna. He was eighty-five. The grandson of Sonor founder Johannes Link, Dr. Link was instrumental in guiding the German drum company's growth from a regional European brand to a major name on the world percussion market in the 1970s and '80s. He was also actively involved in percussion education, including an emphasis on the design and manufacture of Orff percussion instruments for elementary school music programs.

Dr. Link sold his interest in Sonor to the Hohner company in the mid-1990s. But he remained keenly interested in the music industry and in music education throughout his life.

Indy Quickies

The **Los Angeles Music Academy** (LAMA) has received accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). The Association consists of approximately 600 schools of music. They base their decision to provide accreditation on a school's educational quality, institutional integrity, and educational improvements. A commission reviews findings from the school's own self-study, the achievement of educational standards, and an on-site review.

The Bosphorus team includes (from left) Jeff Hamilton, Bill Norman, and Michael Vosbein.

Founded by top LA-area pro musicians in 1996, LAMA emphasizes an intimate, personalized atmosphere, as well as daily live performance experience with professional accompanists. For further information about curriculum and classes, call (626) 568-8850 or visit www.lamusicacademy.com.

Bosphorus Cymbals USA has been purchased by a team of American investors. **Michael Vosbein** has been named president and will handle the day-to-day operations of the company. **Bill Norman** and jazz drumming star **Jeff Hamilton** will serve as vice presidents. Former Bosphorus USA president **Tash Tasova** will remain a partner, facilitating the relationship between the company's US headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia and the corporate headquarters in Istanbul, Turkey. All questions should be directed to Michael Vosbein at (770) 205-0552 or at mvos@bosphoruscymbals.com.

Mapex Drums recently teamed up with **Lowe's Music** of Newhall, California and Mapex artist **Walfredo Reyes Jr.** to support the public school music programs of Redwood City, California. (Reyes's children attend school there.) The school district held a charity auction this past March 26, with proceeds going to benefit Redwood

City's Clifford School's 1st–8th grade music programs. Mapex and Lowe's Music donated products to the auction, including a Mapex V-Series drumkit signed by Reyes and other top musicians.

Premier Percussion Ltd.'s new Web site, www.premier-percussion.com, showcases the company's complete

drum and hardware collection, an improved news and events section, and an artist-information area. You can also access a comprehensive list of Premier distributors worldwide. Over the coming months the new site will add sections dedicated to marching, pipe band, and tuned & orchestral percussion.

Quick Beats

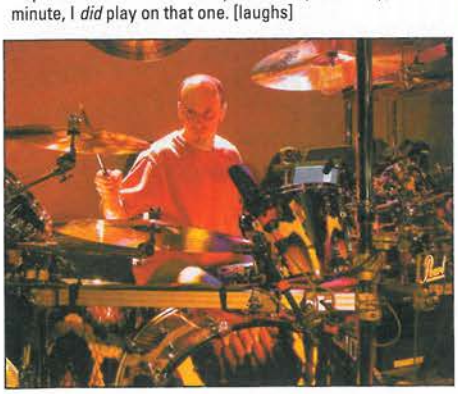
Scott Rockenfield
(Queensrÿche)

What are some of your favorite grooves?
Stewart Copeland on "Message In A Bottle" (The Police), Neil Peart on "Tom Sawyer" (Rush), Clive Burr on "Number Of The Beast" (Iron Maiden), and the theme to the movie *Blade Runner*, by Vangelis.

What's your favorite TV theme music?
Mission Impossible.

If you could put together an imaginary superband, who would be in it?
Well, let's see...Peter Gabriel on vocals, Vangelis on keyboards, Trevor Rabin on guitar, Eddie Jackson on bass, and, of course, me on drums, percussion, and sounds.

What song makes you say, "I wish I played on that one"?
"Operation: MindCrime" by Queensrÿche. Hey, wait a minute, I *did* play on that one. [laughs]



Who's Using What

New Meinl cymbal artists include **Shauney Baby** (Hilary Duff), **Corey Pierce** (God Forbid), **Ryan Jenkinson** (thisGIRL), **J.P. Gaster** (Clutch), and **Ruben Romano** (Nebula). Now using Meinl percussion is hip-hop and R&B studio drummer/percussionist **Omar Phillips** (Erykah Badu, Arrested Development, Outkast, Keith Sweat), as well as **Kyle Cunningham** (Spin66) and **Esteban "Chamo" Lopez** (Salvador).

Cadeson drumset endorsers now include Latin jazz/funk phenom **Tiki Pasillas**, as well as **Lorca Hart** (son of jazz legend Billy Hart).

New Pearl drummers include **Morgan Rose** (Sevendust), **David Buckner** (Papa Roach), **Anthony Beverly** (Frankie Beverly & Maze), and **Malcolm Clark** (The Sleepy Jackson).

Mike Miller (Take Down Tomorrow, Interference) is a Rocket Shells drumset endorser.

New Bosphorus cymbal artists include **Ty Dennis** (The Doors 21st Century), **Marco Meneghin** (Liz Phair), and **Jacob Marshall** (MAE).

Robin DiMaggio is now endorsing the custom-built glass-shelled snare drums of Orlich Percussion Systems.

New Zildjian cymbal endorsers include **Torry "Donna C" Castellano** (The Donnas), **Branden Steineckert** (The Used), **Will Hunt** (Skrape), **John Robert Connors** (Cave In), **Ari Hoenig** (jazz artist), **Otis Brown III** (Joe Lovano), **Adam Topol** (Jack Johnson), **Brian Chase** (The Yeah Yeah Yeahs), **Ed Graham** (The Darkness), **Gary Powell** (The Libertines), **Malcolm Clark** (The Sleepy Jackson), **Chris Cester** (Jet), and **J.J. Johnson** (John Mayer).

New Regal Tip artists include **Lenny White**, **Matt Johnson** (Rufus Wainwright), **Robby Shaffer** (Mercy Me), **Silas McQuain** (Five Foot Thick), **Lavell Jones** (Lucky Peterson), **George Recile** (Bob Dylan), **Jerry Augustyniak** (10,000 Maniacs), **Steve Augustine** (FM Static/Thousand Foot Krutch), **Brian Haley** (Toby Mac/DC Talk), **Brandon Bittner** (Socialburn), and **Andy James** (studio/independent).

Author, teacher, clinician, and Web master **Tiger Bill Meligari** is now endorsing Sabian cymbals, Pintech electronic drums, Axis Percussion pedals, and the MadPlayer.

Brazilian drummer/percussionist **Emiliano Benevides** is endorsing Bauer drums and percussion, as well as Silver Fox drumsticks.

Ed Graham (The Darkness) now plays DW drums, pedals, and hardware.

UK drum and accessory manufacturer Marrell Drums has added US drummer **Jerry O'Neill** (Voodoo Glow Skulls) to their artist roster.

Ryan Yerdon (Gavin Rossdale) is now playing Mayer Bros. drums.

Nine-year-old drum prodigy **Isaiah Williams** is now endorsing AKG microphones.

New drummers and percussionists on the Latin Percussion roster include percussion legend **Airto**, **Joey Castillo** (Queens Of The Stone Age), **John Dolmayan** (System Of A Down), **Brad Hargreaves** (Third Eye Blind), **Rhani Krija** (percussionist for Sting), **Glenn Kotche** (Wilco), and **Yorman Leon** (timbalero for Oscar D'Leon).

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Matt Wilson Quartet

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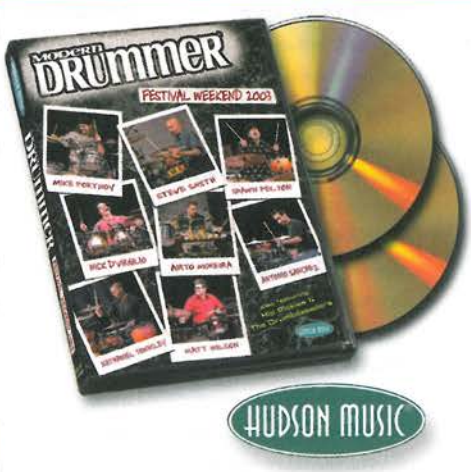

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Aquarian Drumheads	www.aquariandrumheads.com	137
Attack Drumheads	www.attackdrumheads.com	72
Audio Technica	www.audio-technica.com	103
Audix	www.audixusa.com	95
Auralex Acoustics	www.auralex.com	152
Bass DrumO's	www.bigbangdist.com	146
Black Panther Snares	www.mapexdrums.com	37
Bosphorus Cymbals	www.bosphoruscymbals.com	89
Cadeson Drums	www.cadesonmusic.com	31
Cappella Drumsticks	www.cappelladrumsticks.com	151
Carbostick Drumsticks	www.hohnerusa.com	13
CLE Drums, LLC	www.cledrums.com	153
ClearSonic	www.clearsonic.com	150
Craigie Technology (The Duallist)	www.theduallist.com	153
Craviotto Drum Company	www.craviottodrums.com	74
Cymbal Crown Holders	www.bigbangdist.com	152
D'Amico Drums	www.damicodrums.com	152
Doug Tann	www.dreamwater.net/dougtann	153
Drum Center of Lexington		153
Drum Doctors	www.drumdoctors.com	151
Drum Solo	www.drumsolo.cc	150
Drum Supply House	www.drummaker.com	153
Drum Workshop (DW)	www.dwdrums.com	76/77,79
Drum World	www.drumworld.com	101
DrumDial	www.bigbangdist.com	101
Drums, Etc.	www.drumsetc.com	153
Drums On Sale	www.drumsonsale.com	152
Dunnett Classic Drums	www.dunnett.com	150
Evans	www.evansdrumheads.com	49
Explorers Percussion & Drums	www.explorersdrums.com	152
Vic Firth	www.vicfirth.com	123,125,127
Vic Firth	www.vicfirth.com	129,131,133
Five-Star Drum Shops	www.fivestardrumshops.com	47
Fork's Drum Closet	www.forksdrumcloset.com	153
Full Sail Real World Education	www.fullsail.com	80
George's Drum Shop	www.georgesdrumshop.com	152
Gibraltar	www.gibraltarhardware.com	11,78
Gretsch	www.gretsch.com	16,102,CV3
Handmade Rhythm	www.handmaderhythm.com	152
Hansenfütz	www.hansenfutz.com	150
Hart Dynamics	www.hartdynamics.com	169
Hudson Music	www.hudsonmusic.com	107
Humes & Berg	www.humes-berg.com	124
Istanbul Mehmet Cymbals	www.istanbulmehmet.com	23
Istanbul Zilciler (Istanbul Agop)	www.istanbulcymbals.com	144/145
Italuba	www.pimientarecords.com	139
Jammin Sam Drum Wrap	www.jamminsam.com	153
JC's Custom Drum Shop	www.jcdrums.com	153
Jim Payne	www.funkydrummer.com	152
Joe Morello		151
KoSA	www.kosamusic.com	136
LaFayette Music	www.lafmusic.com	153
Larry Crockett	www.lcrockett.com	151
Latin Percussion (LP)	www.lpmusic.com	63
Long Island Drum Center	www.lidrum.com	148
Ludwig	www.ludwig-drums.com	CV2
Maggio Music	www.maggiomusic.net	152
Mayer Bros. Drums	www.mbdrums.com	152
Meinl	www.meinl.de	9
Memphis Drum Shop	www.memphisdrumshop.com	151
MetroPad	www.educationalmusicaccessories.com	152
Mikedolbear.com	www.mikedolbear.com	152
Musician's Friend	www.musiciansfriend.com	161
Musicians Institute	www.mi.edu	75
Not So Modern Drummer, Inc. (NSMD)	www.notsomoderndrummer.com	151
Off•Set Double Bass Drum Pedal	www.pointtremolo.com	28
Pacific Drums & Percussion	www.pacificdrums.com	71
Paiste America	www.paiste.com	3
Peace Drums	www.peacedrum.com	2,
Pearl	www.pearldrum.com	6/7,52
Power Music		109,151
Precision Drum Co.	www.precisiondrum.com	152
Premier	www.premier-percussion.com	81
Pro•Mark	www.promarkdrumsticks.com	20,61
ProRiser	www.proriser.com	150
Puresound	www.puresoundpercussion.com	44
Regal Tip Drumsticks	www.regaltip.com	83
Remo	www.remo.com	65
RMV Drums	www.rmvdrums.com	46
Roc-N-Soc	www.rocnsoc.com	151
RockenWraps	www.rockenwraps.com	153
RTOM/Moongel	www.rtom.com	152
Rupp's Drums	www.ruppsdrum.com	152
Sabian	www.sabian.com	17,59,135
Saluda Cymbals	www.saludacymbals.com	150
Sam Ash Music	www.samash.com	82
Sonor Drums	www.sonor.com	93
Stagg Cymbals	www.staggmusic.com	45
Superscope Technologies	www.superscopetechnologies.com	151
Talent 2000	www.talent2k.com/	151
Tama	www.tama.com	24/25,84/85
Taye Drums	www.taye.com	99,153
The Collective	www.thecollectivenyc.com	167
The Drum Pad	www.thedrumpad.com	151
The U.S. Army Field Band	www.army.mil/fieldband	146
Thompson Vocal Eliminator	www.vocaleliminator.com/g.o/md	153
Toca	www.tocapercussion.com	126
Treeworks	www.treeworkschimes.com	50
Turkish Cymbals	www.turkishcymbals.com	98
UFIP America	www.ufip.com	91
Vater Percussion	www.vater.com	29,48,151
VeriSonic	www.4ddai.com/vs	102
Virtual Drummer School	www.virtualdrummerschool.com	132
Wes Crawford DVD	www.musicandgames4u.com	153
West L.A. Music	www.westlamusic.com	106
Wuhan Cymbals	www.wuhancymbals.com	73
Yamaha	www.yamahadrums.com	15,115,116/117
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